

# SONNAMAN'S AINSLEE'S STORIES THAT CHARM AND ALWAYS WILL



*Sir James M. Barrie  
Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch  
Norman Douglas  
E. L. Grant Watson  
Rafael Sabatini  
E. W. Hornung*

*Electrical  
Experts  
are in  
Big Demand!*

*-L. L. Cooke/*

### Look What These Cooke Trained Men are Earning



Makes \$700 to \$24  
Days in Radio

"Thanks to your interesting Course I made over \$700 in 24 days in Radio. Of course, this is far above the average but I made the average and will therefore offer the why and wherefore of Electricity—the Electrical Expert—who is picked out to 'boss' the ordinary Electricians—to boss the Big Jobs—the jobs that pay \$3,500 to \$10,000 a Year. Get in line for one of these 'Big Jobs.' Start by enrolling now for my easily learned, quickly grasped, right-up-to-the-minute, Spare-Time Home-Study Course in Practical Electricity.

FRED G. NARIN,  
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\$70 to \$500 a Week  
for Jacques

"Now I am specializing in autoelectricity and battery work, and make from \$70 to \$100 a day and expect to double this when I get fully getting started. I don't believe there is another school in the world like yours. Your lessons are excellent and complete."

ROBERT JACQUOT,  
2000 Columbia Ave.,  
Columbus, Ohio.

\$20 a Day for Schreck

"Use my name as a reference and depend on me as a booster. I ever had a bigger thing I ever had was another your course. I am now specializing in aging better than \$500 a month from my own business now. I used to make \$10 a week."

A. SCHRECK,  
Phoenix, Ariz.

Plant Engineer —  
Pay Raised 150%

"I was a dumbbell in electricity until I got in touch with you Mr. Cooke, but now I have charge of a big plant in Boston, and I direct a force of 54 men—electricians, helpers, etc. My salary goes up more than 150%."

GEORGE ILLINGWORTH,  
63 Cabinet Road,  
Holyoke, Mass.



5 big  
outfits given to you—  
no extra  
charge

*The Cooke Trained Man is the Big Pay Man*

# I Will Train You at Home to fill a Big-Pay Job!



**L. L. COOKE**  
Chief Engineer

It's a shame for you to earn \$15 or \$20 or \$30 a week, when in the same six days as an Electrical Expert you could make \$70 to \$200—and do it easier—not work half as hard. Why then remain in the small-pay game, in a line of work that offers no chance, no big promotion, no big income? Fit yourself for a real job in the great electrical industry. I'll show you how.

## Be an Electrical Expert Earn \$3,500 to \$10,000 a Year

Today, even the ordinary Electrician—the "screw driver" kind—is making money—big money. But it's the trained man—the man who has learned the why and wherefore of Electricity—the Electrical Expert—who is picked out to "boss" the ordinary Electricians—to boss the Big Jobs—the jobs that pay \$3,500 to \$10,000 a Year. Get in line for one of these "Big Jobs." Start by enrolling now for my easily learned, quickly grasped, right-up-to-the-minute, Spare-Time Home-Study Course in Practical Electricity.

### Age or Lack of Experience No Drawback

You don't have to be a College Man; you don't have to be a High School Graduate. As Chief Engineer of the Chicago Engineering Works, I know exactly the kind of training you need and I will give you that training. My Course in Electricity is simple, thorough and complete and offers every man, regardless of age, education or previous experience, the chance to become, in a very short time, an "Electrical Expert," able to make from \$70 to \$200 a week.

### No Extra Charge for Electrical Working Outfit

With me, you do practical work—at home. You start right in after your first few lessons to work at your profession in the regular way and make extra money in your spare time. For this you need tools, and I give them to you—5 big complete working outfits, with tools, measuring instruments, and a real electric motor.

MAIL COUPON  
FOR MY  
FREE  
BOOK

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

**The Vital Facts**  
L. L. COOKE,  
Dept. 74,  
2150 Lawrence  
Ave., Chicago

The Man  
Who Makes  
"Big-Pay"  
Men

Send me at once without obligation your big illustrated book and complete details of your Home Study Course in Electricity, including your qualifications and employment service offers.

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_



# They Called Me "Human Clam" But I Changed Almost Overnight

AS I passed the President's office I could not help hearing my name. Instinctively I paused to listen. "That human clam," he was saying, "can't represent us. He's a hard worker, but he seems to have no ability to express himself. I had hoped to make him a branch manager this fall, but he seems to withdraw farther and farther into his shell all the time. I've given up hopes of making anything out of him."

So that was it! That was the reason why I had been passed over time and again when promotions were being made! That was why I was just a plodder—a truck horse for our firm, capable of doing a lot of heavy work, but of no use where brilliant performance was required. I was a failure unless I could do what seemed impossible—learn to use words forcefully, effectively and convincingly.

## What 15 Minutes a Day Will Show You

- How to talk before your club or lodge
- How to address Board Meetings
- How to propose and respond to guests
- How to make a political speech
- How to tell entertaining stories
- How to make after-dinner speeches
- How to converse interestingly
- How to write letters
- How to sell more goods
- How to train your memory
- How to enlarge your vocabulary
- How to develop self-confidence
- How to acquire a winning personality
- How to strengthen your will-power and ambition
- How to become a clear, accurate thinker
- How to develop your power of concentration
- How to be the master of any situation

## In 15 Minutes

### a Day

And then suddenly I discovered a new easy method which made me a powerful speaker almost overnight. I learned how to bend others to my will, how to dominate one man or an audience of thousands. Soon I had won salary increases, promotion, popularity, power. Today I always have a ready flow of speech at my command. I am able to rise to any occasion, to meet any emergency with just the right words. And I ac-

complished all this by developing the natural power of speech possessed by everyone, but cultivated by so few—by simply spending 15 minutes a day in the privacy of my own home, on this most fascinating subject.

There is no magic, no trick, no mystery about becoming a powerful and convincing talker. You, too, can conquer timidity, stage fright, self-consciousness and bashfulness, winning advancement in salary, popularity, social standing and success. Thousands have accomplished, just such amazing things through this simple, easy, yet effective training.

### Send For This Amazing Book!

This new method of training is fully described in a very interesting and informative booklet which is now being sent to everyone mailing the coupon below. This book is called, **How to Work Wonders With Words**. You are told how to bring out and develop your priceless "hidden knack"—the natural gift within you—

which will win for you advancement in position and salary, popularity, social standing, power and real success. You can obtain your copy absolutely free by sending the coupon.



### Now Sent Free

**NORTH AMERICAN INSTITUTE**

3601 Michigan Ave., Dept. 1754, Chicago, Ill.

North American Institute,  
3601 Michigan Ave., Dept. 1754,  
Chicago, Illinois.

Please send me FREE and without obligation my copy of your famous book, **How to Work Wonders With Words**.

Name ..... City ..... State .....

Address ..... City ..... State .....

City ..... City ..... State .....

**AWARDS IN BOOK LOVERS' TOURNAMENT OF FEBRUARY ARE  
ANNOUNCED IN THE FORETASTE ON PAGE 158.**

April  
1926

**AINSLEE'S**  
STORIES THAT CHARM AND ALWAYS WILL

Vol. LVII  
No. 2

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Address all communications to the Street & Smith Corporation

# 60 Days Ago They Called Me "BALDY"

**Now my friends are amazed. They all ask me how I was able to grow new hair in such a short time.**

BOB MILLER and I had both been getting bald for years. We had tried almost every hair restorer on the market. But we might as well have used brass polish. One day Bob left town—a business trip. Weeks passed. I began to wonder if I'd ever see him again.

One afternoon at the office I heard a familiar voice—“Hello, Baldy,” it said. I glanced up, annoyed. There stood Bob.

“For Pete's sake!” I exclaimed, “where have you been keeping yourself?”

We shook hands. “Take off your hat,” I suggested sarcastically. “Let me gaze on that ‘luxuriant hair’ of yours. I haven't seen it for weeks.”

“Luxuriant hair is right,” he retorted. “I've got the finest growth of hair you ever saw!”

I laughed out loud! “Know any more jokes?” I said.

Bob stepped back and swept off his hat. I couldn't believe my eyes. The top of his head, once almost bare, was covered with a brand new growth of real, honest to goodness hair!

## A New Way to Grow Hair

That night I went to Bob's house to try his new hair-growing treatment. He sat me in a chair and placed a strange apparatus on my head and turned on the electricity. The treatment lasted 15 minutes. At the end of the treatment I rubbed the top of my head. “Well, Bob,” I chuckled, “I don't feel any new hair.”

“Of course you don't,” Bob came back. “But just you wait a while.”

On my way home I read a booklet which Bob had given me. It described a new method of growing hair—discovered by Alois Merke, founder of the Merke Institute, Fifth Avenue, New York. It was the only treatment I ever heard of that got right down to the roots of the hair and awakened them to new activity. Bob was proof. I decided to send for the treatment immediately.

## I Get the Surprise of My Life

Every night I spent 15 minutes taking the treatment. The first two or three days nothing happened. But I could feel my scalp beginning to tingle with new life—new vigor. Then one day when I looked in the mirror I got the thrill of a lifetime. All over my head a fine, downy fuzz was beginning to appear. At the end of a month you could hardly see a bald spot on my head. And after 60 days my worries about baldness were ended. I had gained an entirely new growth of healthy hair.

## Here's the Secret

According to Alois Merke, in most cases of loss of hair the hair roots are not dead, but merely dormant—temporarily asleep. To make a sickly tree



grow you would not rub “growing fluid” on the leaves. You must nourish the roots. And it's exactly the same with the hair.

This new treatment, which Merke perfected after 17 years' experience in treating baldness, is the first and only practical method of getting right down to the hair roots and nourishing them.

At the Merke Institute many have paid as high as \$500 for the results secured through personal treatments. Yet now these very same results may be secured in any home in which there is electricity—at a cost of only a few cents a day.

Merke frankly admits that his treatment will not grow hair in every case. There are some cases nothing can help. But so many have regained hair this new way, that no matter how thin your hair may be, he invites you to try the treatment 30 days at his risk, and if it fails to grow hair then your money is instantly refunded. And you are the sole judge.

## Coupon Brings You Full Details

This story is typical of the results that great numbers of people are securing with the Merke Treatment. “The New Way to Make Hair Grow” is a 34-page book which explains the Merke Treatment in detail. It will send you entirely free if you simply mail the coupon below.

This little book tells all about the amazing new treatment, shows what it has done for countless others, and contains valuable information about the hair and scalp. Remember, this book is yours free—to keep. And if you decide to take the treatment you can do so without risking a penny. So mail coupon now. Address Allied Merke Institute, Inc., Dept. 424, 512 Fifth Avenue, New York.

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Allied Merke Institute, Inc.  
Dept. 424, 512 Fifth Avenue, New York City

Please send me, without cost or obligation, in a plain wrapper, a copy of your book, “The New Way to Make Hair Grow.”

Name .....  
(State whether Mr., Mrs. or Miss)

Address .....  
City ..... State .....

City ..... State .....

## GOOD READING

BY

CHARLES HOUSTON

The four of us had found ourselves in a little road house set down in the midst of an Illinois prairie. Two of us were newspaper men on our way to cover a murder trial at a near-by county seat. With us was the young prosecuting attorney who was to win his spurs in this, his first big case, and the head of the local Farm Bureau, a veteran of some sixty years, who had shrewd knowledge of human as well as Mother Nature.

The talk turned naturally to trials past and present, to crime and the strange ways of criminals. It was the prosecutor who said finally:

"I've been thinking how much better you writing fellows could arrange this trial if you had your way. To be quite candid, this is a pretty matter-of-fact business, not much romance and mystery and the like to it. Of course, you will try to work some of that stuff into your stories, but you know, as well as I do, that there's no glamour about this murder and that you will have a hard job keeping folks guessing as to what the end of this particular story will be."

The old farmer chuckled.

"What's become of that saying that 'truth is stranger than fiction?' I never did put much stock in it anyhow. Truth is a pretty commonplace commodity, unless you mix it up with imagination. One man can tell a story that will fall flat as a pancake. Another can tell the same story about the same happening and have folks sitting around with their eyes bulged out. It isn't so much the

story, as the way you tell it. And that's why all the world over, human beings love a good story-teller. Radios and phonographs and motion pictures and high-pressure news-gathering agencies will never take the place of the writer or story-teller who can sit down and spin a yarn that comes straight from the hot fires of imagination. Of course every writer must get his material from his experiences with real life. But you judge him by the way he puts those experiences together, the way he gets them over to his audience. If truth alone were enough to satisfy the human craving for adventure and romance, we wouldn't need any other reading than the Census Reports or the latest crop statistics."

The farmer had put his calloused finger on the reason for the ever-increasing demand on the part of all cross-sections of America for the best of good fiction. More and more, we are finding that there is a hunger deep down in us for life that is more colorful, more full of action, life with a greater "kick" in it, if you like. Clean, rapid-moving books of fiction such as those published by Chelsea House, one of the oldest and best-established concerns in this country, are satisfying this hunger out on the prairie lands of the Mid-West, beyond the Rockies, in the great industrial centers of the East; wherever men and women want to widen their horizons.

So let the highbrows and the pale inmates of "arty" studios sneer if they like; those of us who want life to be rich and abundant know that we can sit

*Continued on 2nd page following*

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# I Was Afraid of This New Way to Learn Music

— Until I Found It Was Easy As A-B-C

## Then I Gave My Husband the Surprise of His Life

**D**ON'T be silly, Mary. You're perfectly foolish to believe you can learn to play music by that method. You are silly to even think about it. Why it claims to teach music in half the usual time and without a teacher. It's impossible."

That is how my husband felt when I showed him an ad telling about a new way to learn music. But how I hated to give up my new hope of learning to play the piano. When I heard others playing, I envied them so that it almost spoiled the pleasure of the music for me. For they could entertain their friends and family . . . . they were musicians. I had to be satisfied with only hearing music.

I was so disappointed. I felt very bitter as I put away the magazine containing the advertisement. For a week I resisted the temptation to look at it again, but finally I couldn't keep from "peeking" at it. It fascinated me so much that finally, half-frightened, half-enthusiastic I wrote to the U. S. School of Music—without letting my husband know.

Imagine my joy when the course arrived and I found that it was as easy as A. B. C. Why, a mere child could master it! My progress was wonderfully rapid and before I realized it, I was rendering selections which pupils who study with private teachers for years can't play. For through this short-cut method, all the difficult, tiresome parts of music have been eliminated and the playing of melodies has been reduced to a simplicity which anyone can follow with ease.

Finally I decided to play for Jack, and show him what a "crazy course" had taught me. So one night when he was sitting reading, I went casually over to the piano and started playing a lovely song. Words cannot describe his astonishment. "Why . . . . why . . . ." he floundered. I simply smiled and went on playing. But soon Jack insisted that I tell him where I had learned . . . . when . . . . how? So I told of my secret.

One day not long after my husband came to me and said, "Mary, don't laugh, but I want to try learning to play the violin by that wonderful method. You certainly proved to me that it is a good way to learn music."

So only a few months later Jack and I were playing together. Now our musical evenings are a marvelous success.



Everyone compliments us, and we are flooded with invitations. Music has simply meant everything to us. It has given us Popularity! Fun! Happiness!

If you, too, like music—then write to the U. S. School of Music for a copy of the booklet "Music Lessons in Your Own Home," together with a Demonstration Lesson, explaining this wonderful new easy method.

Don't hesitate because you think you have no talent. Thousands of successful students never dreamed they possessed musical ability until it was revealed to them by a wonderful "Musical Ability Test." You, too, can learn to play your favorite instrument through this short-cut method.

Send the coupon. The Demonstration Lesson, showing you how they teach will come AT ONCE. Address the U. S. School of Music, 3594 Brunswick Bldg., New York. **Instruments supplied when needed, cash or credit.**

**U. S. School of Music,  
3594 Brunswick Building, New York City.**

Please send me your free book, "Music Lessons in Your Own Home," with introduction by Dr. Frank Crane, Demonstration Lesson and particulars of your Special Offer. I am interested in the following course:

Have you above instrument? . . . . .

Name . . . . . (Please write plainly)

Address . . . . .

City . . . . . State . . . . .

<b>Pick Your Course</b>	
Piano	Harmony and Composition
Organ	Sight Singing
Violin	Ukulele
Drums and Traps	Guitar
Mandolin	Harmonica
Clarinet	Steel Guitar
Flute	Harp
Saxophone	Cornet
"Trombone"	Piccolo
Voice and Speech Culture	Tuba
Automatic Piano Accordion	Finger Control
Piano Accordion	
Banjo	(Tenor, 5 String and Plectrum)

down with a book that bears the "CH" brand on its jacket and be carried away by the sweep and thrill of it.

Here are some recent Chelsea House publications that cost only 75 cents apiece, that can be had at any reputable dealer, and that have on their every page the true spirit of adventure and romance:



**T**HE LOVE BRIDGE, by Mary Imlay Taylor, Published by Chelsea House, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City. Price 75c.

Duncan Hart, young engineer, had two dreams. The one was to finish the great bridge across the canon. The other, that his sweetheart should be the first to cross it. But there were forces working in the dark to destroy these dreams. How Duncan grappled with these human and natural forces; how near they came to destroying him and his life's dream is the story told with power and beauty by the author of "The Love Bridge." It is a Western story and a love story, too, that holds the reader throughout.



**S**HADOW HALL, by John Paul Seabrooke, Published by Chelsea House, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City. Price 75c.

At certain hours, usually near twilight, weird shadows fell ominously across the crumbling walls of an old house in which lived a strange character. A beautiful girl goes to this house and straightway becomes involved in a heart-stopping a series of adventures as you have ever read about. Mr. Seabrooke has written a detective story that you cannot soon forget. Not until you come to the last chapters is there a hint as to the solution of the mystery that haunts the creaking boards of "Shadow Hall."



**O**OTHER FOLKS' MONEY, by W. B. M. Ferguson, Published by Chelsea House, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City. Price 75c.

Everybody in the little town thought that

Wayne Carrington was well to do. He certainly did nothing to disabuse them. But everybody was greatly mistaken, and it was just by good luck that he found some money in an old purse that enabled him to keep up the bluff for a while longer. In the end, however, the finding of that money was disastrous, for it led Wayne into all sorts of difficulties and into the company of some mighty "bad hombres." This is an adventure story that you will just eat up. It's about home folks, the sort you see in the streets every day, and yet it has as strange and romantic twists to it, as though the scenes were laid in the South Seas.



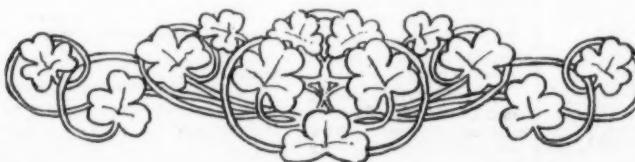
**T**HE LUCK OF BLIND GULCH, by Joseph Montague, Published by Chelsea House, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City. Price 75c.

A Western story from Mr. Montague is always a treat for those who like their fiction to step out free, wide, and easy, and here's no exception to the rule. It's the story of a young Missouri farmer who joins in the mad, bad, glad California gold rush, and who is shown enough excitement to satisfy even a Missourian. Mr. Montague chooses one of the most thrilling periods in our pioneering history to write about, and does it with skill and an enthusiasm that is catching.



**B**LACK STAR'S RETURN, by Johnston McCulley, Published by Chelsea House, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City. Price 75c.

By this time most lovers of good detective stories know Black Star, the cunning man of mystery, the master criminal who terrorized the police of an entire city. This story is the second of the Black Star series in the Chelsea House Popular Copyrights, the first being "The Black Star," and the third being called "Black Star's Campaign." If by any chance you haven't been following the adventures of Black Star, here's a golden opportunity. If you read the first of this series, then you don't need any further urging to get this book from your dealer to-night.



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# Give Me 5 Days and I'll Give You a *Magnetic Personality* Let Me Prove It — *FREE!*

I CAN so magnetize your personality that people will be drawn to you at once, irresistibly.

I can show you how to use the amazing principle of magnetic control to win quick success in your business or profession.

I can place in your hands the key to supreme power and happiness—give you a great new confidence in yourself—overcome almost at once any timidity or self-consciousness you may have.

I can give you a glorious new magnetic personality so that you can influence the minds of others, attract people to you instantly, be popular and well-liked wherever you go!

Let me prove it. Give me 5 days, and if in that time you do not experience a new surge of personal power, if you do not find yourself making friends wherever you may be, if you do not discover yourself on the road to happiness, wealth, success—the test will cost you nothing whatever. You are the judge.

## What is Personal Magnetism?

No leader of men has long survived without it. No great orator or musician or actor can hold audiences spellbound without it. No salesman, no business man, can win an outstanding success without it. Personal magnetism! It is your greatest capital—greater by far than wealth, than good looks. It is you, made magnetic! It is you, with a personality so fascinating and irresistible that people are drawn to you as steel is drawn to a magnet!

## My Method Releases Your Personal Magnetism

No long course of study. No tedious mental exercises. Just a simple, clear, age-old principle that releases the full sweep of your magnetic potentialities—and makes you almost a new person. A principle that never fails to work, because it con-



Think what personal magnetism will mean to you in business, in your contact with men and women. You will win! You will get what you want!

spires with Nature to make you the dynamic, forceful, fascinating person you were intended to be.

The fundamental principles of Personal Magnetism have been put into a beautiful extra large size volume under the title of "The Cultivation of Personal Magnetism." This book gives you the key to a magnetic personality in only five days—or it costs you nothing. That is my free proof offer to you.

The study and scope of Personal Magnetism is as broad as life itself. "Fires of Magnetism," "Sex Influences," "The Magnetic Voice," "Physical Magnetism," "The Magnetic Eye," "The Road to Power" and "The Winning Personality" are only a few of the subjects covered in this amazing book.



Remember My 5-Day Free Proof Offer! Send Off the Coupon TODAY

Merely mail coupon below and this remarkable volume, with cover in handsome dark burgundy cloth, gold embossed, will be sent you by return mail. If you aren't stirred and inspired in the 5-day free period, return it and it costs you nothing. Otherwise keep it as your own and remit only \$3 in full payment. You are the sole judge. You do not pay unless you are delighted. Clip and mail this coupon NOW. Ralston University Press, Dept. 86 F, Meriden, Conn.

RALSTON UNIVERSITY PRESS,  
Dept. 86 F, Meriden, Conn.

All right—I'll be the judge. You may send me the volume "Cultivation of Personal Magnetism" for 5 days' FREE EXAMINATION in my home. Within the 5 days I will either remit the special low price of only \$3.00, in full payment, or return it without cost or obligation.

Name .....

Address .....

City ..... State .....

# Classified Advertising

## Agents and Help Wanted

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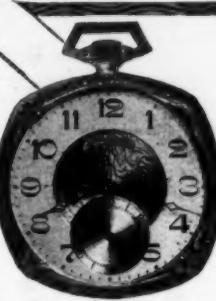
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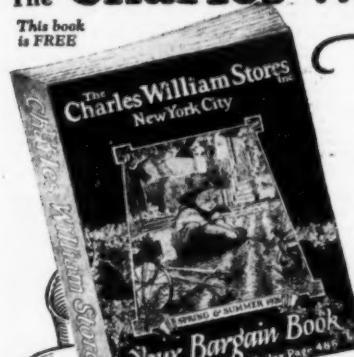
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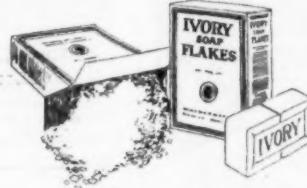
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# AINSLEE'S

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## *A Complete Novel* Frank <sup>by</sup> Harrís

*Author of*

*A Daughter  
of Eve*



## SONIA

IT was a chance meeting—pure chance, if indeed there is such a thing. I was giving a sort of farewell dinner to people I had met in Munich; in another ten minutes I should have been in my own room and have missed her. She had only stopped with her mother to rest for the night on the way from Paris to Vienna and had come downstairs by chance—chance?

How well I remember the meeting! It was in the smoking room of the Vierjahreszeiten Hotel. A couple of professors, some men from the embassies, and a captain of Uhlans had been dining with me. The dinner had

been dull; our talk had gradually degenerated into spasmodic remarks; and in spite of the efforts of the French attaché to be witty in a language he had only a smattering of, I had come to the conclusion that specialists do not make good company, when suddenly I saw a face—a girl's face—looking through the upper part of the glass door. It disappeared, and I was just hoping that my guests would go away soon when the door opened and the girl came into the room and took a seat at the table almost opposite me. The room was a public room, usually used for smoking and coffee, but in Germany one does not expect to see a

young woman act with independence and I was a little surprised. The curious part of the matter is that from the moment she entered I remember everything that happened—every word she said, each of her slightest gestures—with extraordinary vividness. At first she was silent. She merely drew the black-lace mantilla she was wearing a little farther forward on her head and then let her eyes rest for a moment or two, first on one man and then on the next. There was nothing impertinent in her scrutiny, no curiosity, even; the glance seemed merely meditative and impersonal; but the French attaché instinctively twisted his mustache to a bolder curve. When the eyes that had traveled round the half circle met mine, I was curiously interested. Was it the girl's indifference to the other men that piqued me? Or was there something really impressive in her calm self-possession?

My looks must have betrayed the interest I felt in her; for she suddenly spoke to me in French.

"You're not a German, are you?"

"No," I replied in the same tongue; "I am English. These gentlemen are guests of mine." Then taking my courage in both hands, I added: "If I had the pleasure of knowing your name, I would introduce them to you."

"No, please not," she said, quickly disposing of my attempt to bring my friends into the conversation. "I am glad you are English; I have wanted to know an Englishman for a long time." She spoke quickly, but with long pauses between the sentences; the effect was to heighten one's interest in what she was saying.

"I hope I may consider that as a compliment," I replied inanely. I never talked so stupidly as to this girl on whom already I wished to make a good impression.

"Scarcely," she retorted with imper-

turable seriousness; "the reverse, I think."

"Really?" I exclaimed in amazement. "May I ask why?"

"It is plain; but—your guests are going."

And so they were. Headed by the French attaché with his "*cher*," and "*combien je regrette*," and his bow that passed to the lady with a deep inclination of respectful reproach, they all took their leave. They had scarcely disappeared when I turned to speak to her again. But that was not her humor. Solemnly rising opposite me, she drew her heels together and bowed to me as if she had a hinge in her back, with such an exact imitation of the German captain's salute that I could not help laughing. She laughed too—merely, like a child.

"What strange people!" she cried. "What strange people! Did you ever see such marionettes?"

"They are a little stiff," I admitted; "but you were going to tell me why you don't like Englishmen."

"I don't know any Englishmen," she said, looking at me with frank directness, "and from what I have read about them, I'm afraid I should not like them. I'm afraid not," she repeated decisively.

"What do you mean?" I asked; and while she set to work to answer me, I took the opportunity of looking at her in order to make up my mind whether she was really good looking or not. I knew already—her walk and movements showed—that she had a good figure; but her complexion was tallowy, as if she had lived much in close rooms, and it took more than one glance to see that her features were good. Perhaps the oval of the face was too round for beauty—the forehead was certainly too broad—but the eyes were really fine, a clear hazel flecked with gold, which doesn't at all explain the impression they gave of transparent sincerity and courage. Her

staccato manner of speaking with long pauses between each sentence became more marked, I noticed, when the subject matter interested her.

"The French—we know what they are," she began. "Nothing will ever alter them. The Germans, too, we know; they are all like that!"—with a gesture that seemed to people again the empty room. "But the English are hard to know well. They have done great things in the past—brought political liberty into life and built up a great empire; but one feels as if their work were finished. Don't you know what I mean? A selfish individualism is the soul of them—the characteristic—and that is not what we want to-day."

I was more than interested, I was much astonished and half annoyed at her frank if somewhat doctrinaire criticism.

"I don't know exactly what you mean," I replied. "What do you find us lacking in? We don't seem yet to have failed in the world," I added, with more composure, feeling that at last I had got on safe ground.

"That's just it," she retorted quickly, laying her hand on the table, "you are successful, and therefore satisfied, as if material success and contentment were not a proof of spiritual failure."

"Now I'm afraid you have got beyond me," I replied, and, half to cover my pique, I forced a smile, "unless, indeed, you will mention a nation that has failed materially and yet been a spiritual success."

"Athens," she cried, with a look of astonishment. Her eyes were magnificent. "And Judea—they both speak to the soul and are more interesting to humanity than Rome, for instance, with its insensate pride and lust of domination."

I was silenced, if not convinced. No satisfactory reply suggesting itself at the moment, I tried to make our talk lighter, more personal, by asking:

"And what countrywoman are you?"

"Guess!" she threw out with a smile.

"I am at a loss," I replied hesitatingly. "You are dark, and might be a Spaniard from the mantilla. But you have no accent in French and none in German that I can distinguish. I am puzzled."

"You are mistaken," she said; "I have an accent in German—a strong accent. I am a Russian."

"A Russian. Strange! I'm going to Russia soon." Her look of interest exciting me, I went on: "A teacher at Oxford put the idea into my head; an odd mixture, he is, of art critic and socialist."

"What is his name?" she asked.

"Oh, you would scarcely have heard of him, and yet he's interesting; his name's Ruskin; a sort of professor at Oxford, and a wonderful writer."

"So," she said, "he has sympathies with the poor, has he?"

"The deepest sympathy; he gave nearly all his fortune away to them and preached a sort of new crusade in their favor."

"An Englishman?" she asked wonderingly.

"Yes, indeed," I replied warmly. "There's nothing strange in that, surely. Every one must admit that we have done more for the poor than any other nation."

"We knew you had more to do," she replied, and then after a long pause, she added, "but not that you had done more."

"I wish you knew Ruskin," I went on, feeling that his fine personality gave me the best chance of interesting her. "He is all enthusiasm and unselfishness—a remarkable man. He had a great influence at Oxford and did a lot of good."

"And now you are coming to Russia?"

"Yes; that was a sort of farewell dinner I was giving."

"Then you are coming at once?"

At this moment the door opened and a young man entered the room. The girl presented him simply—"My brother;" we bowed and shook hands. One thing was sure; he was utterly unlike his sister. She was tall and graceful, whereas he was below the average height and very slight. A little, thin, nervous apparition with the tiniest hands, and dressed with excessive care like a French dandy.

His sister went on: "This gentleman is thinking of coming to Russia to learn Russian and he is interested in social questions. We are too, are we not, André?" And she put her arm caressingly on the young man's shoulder.

"You are," he said smiling; the glance was sympathetic and made me like him.

I don't know why, but the entrance of this new person on the scene seemed to remove the girl from me, and I was surprised to find resentment in me at the discovery. I determined to do my best to keep up the acquaintance.

"I was telling your sister," I began, "that I was just leaving Munich to go to Russia. I hope we may meet there."

"But if you are going soon," she said, "why not go with us? We are leaving for Vienna this evening by the express."

"Yes," said the young man, nodding in answer to my look of inquiry, "why not come with us?"

"But you have probably a father or a mother who might object to my intrusion."

"Oh, no," the girl broke in, "my mother is resting upstairs, but I am sure that she would be glad if you would come with us. And then we might learn more about Ruskin and his socialistic ideas."

"Are you sure she wouldn't object?" I insisted.

"Of course, I'm sure; but I will write and ask her and show you what she

says. Then you will know." She turned to the table and drew the writing materials toward her.

"You see," the brother said, smiling to me, "every one does what Sonia wants. She always has her own way, and it is generally a good way."

As he spoke, the girl turned round, blushing vividly and looking wonderfully pretty.

"Now, Andrushka, you are praising me and that's not allowed. Besides, if you talk about me how can I write my letter? I must listen." And she laughed at the implied confession.

A moment later she had rung the bell and given the note to the waiter.

"Now tell me of your Ruskin," she said, turning round in her chair. "He interests me. He must be like a man I knew in Petersburg, who had a great influence on me—Michailoff. He was a great man in some ways, a great intelligence, but he was not good."

"Ah," I said, "Ruskin is good. That's perhaps the secret of his power." Somehow or other, I felt that I was carrying my audience with me in my enthusiasm and the impulse to continue overcame me. "His belief comes from the heart and he is not afraid to speak to the heart." She nodded with quick approval. "In one of his lectures at Oxford—a lecture to a thousand, irreverent undergraduates—I remember he paused in the middle of something he was saying and turned upon us with the words, 'We should all be frequent in breaking bread with the poor.' The effect was extraordinary; one felt that Jesus must have spoken like that.

"It was he who put the idea into my head of studying social questions on the Continent; he thought that the student, like the apprentice, should have his *Wanderjahre*."

At this moment the German waiter came in and handed the girl a note. After one glance at it she handed it

to me. It was from her mother and this is how it began:

*Je serai charmée de faire la connaissance d'un Anglais; ils sont si comme-il-faut. Ton ami sera le bienvenu—*

"You see," said Sonia quietly, "my mother has answered as I knew she would. Now you will come, won't you?"

"I can hardly come to-night," I replied. "I have to pack and some friends to see; but I will follow. If you will tell me the hotel you are going to in Vienna, I will follow you—in forty-eight hours at most."

At this they both rose: the brother seemed too nervous to sit still for any length of time.

"Your Ruskin interests me," the girl said quietly, "and you interest me more, for you may act while he has only talked or written." She spoke without a trace of coquetry. "I shall be glad to see you in Vienna. I am glad already that I did not obey my first impulse and run away when I looked through the door and saw you all sitting there like automatons, so stiff and prim," and she laughed again at the recollection.

"Did you really feel shy?" I asked. "You seemed perfectly composed."

"I'm glad," she replied; "shyness is childish. One has to conquer those impulses, don't you think?"

Since I had talked of Ruskin, her manner had grown quite friendly, and the change pleased me.

At this moment her brother opened the door, and she passed out of the room with the words, "The Ring Hotel, Wednesday afternoon," on her lips. I stood looking after her, feeling as if some of the brightness had gone out of the air and the warmth.

Until that day I had never thought myself very impressionable, but I was now to learn the extraordinary influence a girl could exercise on me after a single meeting. At first I seemed to

feel nothing but surprise at her intelligence. We had only talked for a short time and yet she had astonished me; was "material success" really "a proof of spiritual failure?" as she had said. I could not believe that; it seemed a paradox to me, and yet a paradox full of disquieting possibilities. She had evidently peculiar standards. The talk about Ruskin had touched her emotions; was he her ideal? Hardly. Almost her last words showed that she preferred men of action to writers or speakers. And then my thought passed to her confession that when she first looked into the room she had felt too shy to enter it, and I dwelt on that; it seemed to bring her closer to me. Her manner, too, had been wholly womanly and sympathetic when she told me she would be glad to see me in Vienna. I kept recalling this and her delicious shyness, and her vivid blushing under her brother's praise. In spite of her intellect, she was a woman—charming. I wanted to see her again; I would go to the train to see them off, I thought. No, that would appear too marked an attention. I mustn't make a fool of myself; I didn't know who she was, nor her name even. But I should like to know what she meant exactly, when she said that I might *act*; as if deeds were more than any speech or book. What sort of action did she mean?

I went out for my usual walk in the afternoon, but I walked as one in a dream. I could not help recalling her words, her rare gestures, her looks—every glance had meaning in it. By the way, what a funny trick of speaking she had; nervously abrupt and quick, with long pauses. Was that like her shyness, an impulse held in rein by reason? And why was shyness so wonderful and charming in her? It was common enough in other girls and in them rather uninteresting. The whole charm lay, of course, in the magic

of her personality. She might be any one, I felt, or do anything. I could not quite understand her, and that excited me.

Why should I not go to the train? She had been perfectly frank with me; why should I not be as ingenuous with her? I wanted to go; that was certain. I wanted to see her again; to feel the cool, firm hand, and win from her, if possible, another expression of interest in me. Yes, that was it. I desired this girl's interest and her praise more than I ever desired praise from anybody in my life. I felt that what she said would be absolutely sincere. That was not love, I said to myself; it was the effect her nature made on mine. In reality I wanted praise. I, go to the station! It was silly not to go. I, meet them on the platform with some flowers—one bunch for the mother and one for the girl. That would make it look all right. I, hurry back and get the flowers!

I was on the platform waiting for them before the train was made up. I had a Dienstmann with me carrying my bouquets, and had already paid him and given him most definite instructions to make himself scarce, the moment I took the flowers from him, when suddenly I saw them coming toward me. They were almost the first arrivals, and walking toward them I thought, "We shall have quite ten minutes together." The mother was being wheeled along in a chair, and the daughter was walking by her side. The old lady was very stout and seemed almost incapable of moving, but her eyes were bright and intelligent—hazel too, though far smaller than her daughter's; and as soon as the daughter presented me with, "This is the gentleman, mother," she told me in very perfect French that she was glad to see me and still more glad to think that I should meet them in Vienna and go with them to their place near Petersburg.

"I am a great invalid," she went on, "but Sonia and André will keep you company, and, if you want to learn Russian, it is certainly dull enough at — to learn anything."

Of course I thanked her and said how sorry I was to see that she was not strong, but she interrupted me briskly:

"Oh, I am strong, quite strong; it is my body that is weak, and above all, lazy—very lazy," and she laughed.

"Mother says that," said Sonia, "but she is indeed ailing. You know you were very ill in Paris, mother."

"Ah, dear Paris," repeated the old lady, with a sigh, "how I love it, with its frivolity and gayety. It is all so pleasant to me. There seems to be no winter there, and in Russia it is all winter and solitude, and I hate it."

"You see," said the girl gravely, "mother is scarcely a Russian. She speaks very little Russian; she lived nearly all her youth in Paris; her father was in the embassy there. I often say she is not a Russian or she could not speak of Russia as she does."

"Of course," retorted the mother with a comical little smile, "children nowadays know more than their parents. But I must be getting into the train. I am very heavy and almost helpless."

In a few minutes we had got her into the carriage and settled her among books and wraps, and then for the first time I remembered my flowers and handed her a bouquet, which brought forth voluble thanks. She loved flowers, she said; it was so kind of me to think of them; an old woman was not used to such attentions, and so forth.

My opportunity had come. Turning to the girl, I gave her the other bouquet, and in a voice which I made as matter of course as possible, asked her to walk up the platform with me. With rare opportuneness, the brother had gone off to get papers, and with-

out a word Sonia turned from the carriage and I was alone with her. I hardly knew how to begin.

"You love Russia," I said, still under the impression of the feeling with which she had spoken.

She turned to me and nodded slowly.

"Yes, I love it," she said. "I love it with all my heart and soul." After a pause she went on: "Our peasants call it 'Holy Russia,' you know, and to us it is even more than that. The other European nations are uninteresting. What they have done, they will do again; their course is traced; the orbit known. Their future will be as common as their past. But everything is possible to Russia. If humanity is ever to do or be anything great, if men are ever to rise to the possibilities in them and live noble lives, it must be in Russia. She is the last of the European nations to enter into her birthright. How can one help loving her—'Holy Russia'!"

She spoke with extraordinary passion; but what she said was too reasoned and decided, I thought; it seemed to put a great distance between us; I hardly knew how to answer her. The conversation went lamely afterward, and in a minute or so the bell rang. As she entered the carriage, she said:

"I shall be looking for you on Wednesday afternoon. You are sympathetic."

Perhaps it was her foreign phrase that made me act like a foreigner; I bowed my head to her and kissed her hand, and the next moment she was in the train and had taken her seat. I remember shaking hands with her brother; but she did not come to the window, and I went away from the station with a vision in my mind of her first appearance as I saw her walking by the side of her mother's chair, tall and graceful.

When I thought over this meeting I was disappointed; nothing new had

come to me from her. The truth probably was that I had already been moved so intensely in the afternoon that my feelings were incapable of receiving another new and profound impression of the same sort in the evening. But still her strength of character and passionate enthusiasm were clearer to me than they had been. Her soul appeared to me like a flame of extraordinary steadiness and height. An astonishing girl, I said to myself, most astonishing!

As my stay in Munich drew to an end I began to dwell more and more on the womanly and charming side of her character, and especially on the interest she seemed to take in me; and so I cultivated, I suppose, the growth of a similar feeling in myself. All through life we are merely children, and turn naturally to what is sweet to us; but my longing for the pleasant fruit was checked by a sort of natural caution. I could see that my new friends were people of some importance, but I resolved to find out much more about them before I committed myself definitely, and thus I lulled my inborn prudence to rest.

On the Wednesday morning, when I got into the train, I could not help noticing that my usual indifference had deserted me. I was so unnaturally eager that every now and again I had to laugh at my own impatience. I took no interest in what went on about me; in imagination I was already at the goal, standing before her, looking into her eyes, touching her hands. And so I lived in my dream paradise, shutting out as far as I could the banalities of the railway journey. As soon as I had unpacked my luggage and made myself decent, I got the waiter to take me to their sitting room. In a moment Sonia was before me, holding out both hands to me. I took them in some surprise; the mute appeal was so intense; but her first words explained everything.

"He is so ill," she cried. "An-

drushka. I was afraid; but now you have come, it will be all right," and she sighed with relief.

"Ill!" I repeated. "Sit down and tell me about it. What is the matter? When did it begin?"

"He must have caught cold," she replied. "You know he has always been very delicate, and he won't take care of himself. We reached Vienna very early on Tuesday morning; it was cold, and he must have caught a chill, for in the afternoon he complained of headache and pains in his limbs, so I put him to bed and sent for a doctor. But the fever has increased; his temperature rose all through the night, and though it is supposed to go down a little in the morning, it has not gone down but gone up, ever since the beginning, and the doctor looks very grave."

Tears came into her eyes. I wanted to take her in my arms and console her, and the impulse was so strong that I rose to my feet in order by brusque movement to throw it off.

"What does the doctor call it?" I asked. "Dangerous fevers don't come like that in a day from any ordinary chill."

"You will see the doctor," she replied. "He will be back in an hour or so, and you must ask him. But since you have come I am less anxious."

She spoke like a child, a tired child, and as I took in the weariness of her face, I said:

"You have been up all night. You have not changed your clothes, I am sure. Now go away at once and change. Then you must come back and have some tea."

She nodded her head again like a child and smiled faintly as she passed into the room on the other side of the sitting room. In half an hour she was back again looking far brighter and better. We had tea together, and I for one enjoyed it. Then began for

us a perpetual interchange of emotions, a partnership of hopes and fears which gradually drew us closer and closer in sympathy and mutual comprehension.

I saw at once that her love for her brother had made her excessively anxious about him; the quickness of her intelligence acting on her ignorance of disease had frightened her so that she dreaded the worst before there was any cause for anxiety. Of course, I set myself to combat her fears and give her confidence, and I got the German doctor to help me. At first he wanted to make out that the case was serious. All doctors do this, I think; it exalts one's opinion of their skill if the patient recovers, and if he chance to die—well, the doctor is safe, for at the very beginning he said it was serious. But pushed into a corner, the doctor had to admit that dangerous fevers are generally of long inception; and that young André was probably suffering from nothing but a feverish attack which would pass off almost as quickly as it had come. I was more than repaid for all my efforts when Sonia said to me after the doctor had left:

"What courage you give me! What confidence!"

I tried to persuade her to go to bed and let me sit up in her stead, but this she would not hear of. Nor could I persuade her to dine with me. She felt quite strong, she said, after the tea, and did not want anything more. All I could do was to order a cup of consommé to be left in the room and make her promise to take it during the night, and then she insisted on my going. I was not to stay in the sitting room; I was not to return after my dinner; she felt she ought not to leave her brother or to see me again that evening. No, it must be good-by till to-morrow morning, and all I could do was to repeat, "Good night, good night, Sonia," and take my leave.

I went to the dining room rather

pleased with myself. I felt that I had made considerable progress; I had called her "Sonia" without rebuff. I saw that she liked me, too; and altogether I was pretty confident. In this hopeful mind I made a good dinner, went to bed, and slept like a top.

In the morning I called upon her only to find her even more anxious than she had been the day before. The patient had scarcely slept at all; his temperature was still going up; the pulse rapid and fitful. In spite of her attempts at self-control, Sonia was evidently very nervous, and I had harder work to arouse her courage this time because she was tired out with another night's watching and sleeplessness. I could not persuade her to go to rest or let me take her place. It was enough for her, she said, that I was in the hotel. It did her good. But she would not hear of me as a nurse; that was her business.

"But," I said, "you are wearing yourself out. You are suffering already; you will make yourself ill if you go on like this."

"Think of what he is suffering," she said in a pitiful little whisper, and turned to go to him again. I tried to keep her in the room, and when I saw that was impossible, tried to make her promise to see me again in an hour, but she wouldn't. I could come back in the afternoon, she said, or better still in the evening at seven o'clock, when the doctor was to come, and then she would see me. She seemed to take a positive pleasure in her own weariness and discomfort, as if her suffering could diminish her brother's.

I went out, walked about, and bought some necessaries, and thus wore through a gloomy and stupid day. I had begun to blame myself for always giving in to Sonia; the man, it seemed to me, should make his will dominant, whereas I was continually doing what she wished. Then I remembered what

her brother had said, that every one did what Sonia wished, and that usually her way was the best way, and with this thought I tried to appease my vanity. But a spirit of revolt was in me, a resolve to have my way a little, and so in the evening I waylaid the doctor in the porch of the hotel and persuaded him to take my side and insist on Sonia's going to bed. A compliment or two made him willing to do all I wanted. She was very nervous and oversensitive, he said, and the brother had no constitution and seemed to have wasted the greater part of the little vital energy he was born with. "The girl is strong and healthy," was his conclusion, "but the boy is a poor creature."

After he had been in the bedroom a few minutes, I went into the sitting room and waited for them, and when they came in together, I attacked at once. But in spite of the doctor's assistance I should not have carried my point if I had not shown Sonia that the only way to sit up on Saturday night and on Sunday night was to go to bed on Friday night. Then she consented, on my promising to wake her up if any change took place in the patient's condition; but before she would go to her room she gave me a multitude of minute directions. At length I was left alone with the patient. He did not seem to know me, but that was not very wonderful, as his temperature was about one hundred and four. If it went up a point higher I was to give him a little weak brandy and water, otherwise nothing but milk and soda, and I was to take his temperature every two hours.

At ten o'clock I found his temperature nearly one hundred and five. I gave him some brandy and water. Holding his pulse, I soon noticed that the stimulant had done him good; it was strength he needed; I repeated the dose again and again. At twelve o'clock

his temperature was one hundred and three, and as I turned from him I saw that Sonia had come to the bedside. I immediately led her away into the sitting room; told her of the fortunate turn the fever had taken, and insisted upon her going to bed. But it needed no insistence; she was quite reasonable now.

"I am so glad," she said over and over again, and almost immediately afterward: "Do you know, I am very tired and thirsty. Might I have something to drink?"

I poured her out some soda and milk, and had the satisfaction of hearing her promise that she would go to bed at once. After that I closed her own door on her and went again to her brother's bedside. It was all plain sailing afterward. The patient's temperature gradually diminished, until at six o'clock it was barely one hundred and one, or less than it had been on Wednesday afternoon.

I had the chart in my hand and was studying it in the half light of the curtain-shaded room, when I suddenly felt a hand on my shoulder and the next moment Sonia put her finger on the chart with a little gleeful whisper:

"Then it was true! I'm so glad. He's much better, isn't he?" And as I replied very confidently, "He is all right, I think," she took my head in both her hands and kissed me twice on the forehead.

"You have cured him," she said. "I knew you would; you are all health, one with nature and life—not overwrought or tortured, I mean, like we are. And I, of course, I kept awake for days, and then at the crisis overslept myself."

She looked so dainty fresh as she spoke that I tried to take her in my arms, but she drew herself away from me at once with a finger on her lips and a glance at the bed, so that I could only smile my entire satisfaction.

"Come out," she said, "and tell me all about it," and in the sitting room I told her of the happy change.

All she said was, "You cured him. I felt sure you would from the first, you healer!" When I tried to give the doctor the credit, she would not have it; she merely shook her head imperiously and said, "I know, I know." And in this state the doctor found us.

After a short examination of the patient he confirmed us in the belief that the crisis was over and that there was no longer any danger. In fact he declared that as the day was going to be warm the windows of the sick room could be opened and the patient might take a little bouillon. He had brought a nurse with him, too, and insisted that she should take Sonia's place at the bedside.

"But what shall I do?" asked Sonia, in a dismal way that made us both laugh.

"Well," he said, "I think you had better go for a drive and have a pleasant day after all your anxieties."

I could have hugged him for the suggestion, which I took care, however, to receive in as matter of course a way as possible. When I said that I would come back at eleven with a carriage, the doctor backed me up valiantly as one who knew that he was pleasing his clients by his determined attitude.

"I will answer for the patient," he said; "you go and enjoy yourselves."

"But first I must tell mother," said Sonia; and she hurried off.

After my tub and breakfast I felt completely refreshed, so spent my time in hunting up the best droshky I could find; and punctually at eleven I called for Sonia. She had only to put her hat on, she said, but first I must come in and see how much better André was. I found a marvelous change in him. His face was peaky and white, of course, and his hands thin to trans-

parency, but he looked something like his old self and had developed, the nurse said, a remarkable appetite. He was almost too weak to speak, but he smiled at us and seemed quite comfortable.

Shall I ever forget that drive, I wonder. We went down the Ring, through the crowds and past the shops, and then out along the Prater. The air was like champagne. In spite of the sun's warmth it was cool under the trees, with the Danube water gleaming through the leaves on our left. Everything was gay and bright in the summer sunshine, and Sonia chattered away with the absolute unconsciousness of a happy child. What she said I don't know, and I would not reproduce it if I could. It was all so light and unimportant and happy, just the natural rebound of her spirit from the depression and anxiety of the last few days.

Suddenly she said she was hungry, and I asked her which was the best place to get something to eat. She called out the name of a restaurant to the driver, who at once turned toward the city. The restaurant stood on one of the corners of the Ringstrasse, but Sonia insisted on the driver going to the side entrance.

"The private rooms are there," she explained, "and we don't want to go into a public room to-day, do we?"

Of course, I agreed with her, but a little chill came over me. Had she gone to a private room before, I wondered? With some other man, perhaps? The gayety and intoxication seemed to have gone out of the air. As I followed her up the red-carpeted stairs, I was plunged back into my old self and became a little more critical even than usual.

But Sonia would not have it, and sulkiness was impossible in her company. The lunch was to be the most wonderful lunch that was ever ordered;

I must choose it all; but she was very hungry and it must come quick. And wasn't the bread in Vienna the best I had ever eaten, and wasn't it a glorious day, and splendid to be together, till at last I, too, entered into her mood and talked and laughed without knowing why.

The lunch was not half over however when Sonia declared she must hurry and get back. In vain I remonstrated with her. I told her that in Vienna the coffee was even better than the bread and that I wanted some, but she would not listen to me. She must go back. If I wanted to, I could stay and drink my old coffee; she'd go home by herself. Before I knew what I was doing she had whisked me downstairs and into the droshky.

At the staircase of the hotel she left me, telling me that she would be back in a quarter of an hour; and she was back in that time. André, it appeared, was really much better; his mother was sitting with him and we were free to go wherever we liked. So off we went, side by side, into the solitude of the crowded streets.

From this day our true companionship began, an intimacy of every hour, which lasted for weeks and weeks, and makes it impossible for me to attempt to chronicle any single day's doings. I remember nearly every hour of it, though I must resolve now not to tell everything I remember; but simply the deepest impressions made upon me, whatever was at once novel and enduring in our intercourse.

One morning, for instance, was spent in the Belvedere Gallery; Sonia wanted to show me this, that, and the other picture. I soon found she was a most interesting guide. She did not judge like any one else whom I had ever seen. She evidently knew something about painting and loved colors for their own sake; but her judgment was always of the spirit. I do not mean by that that

she judged pictures from the literary point of view—by the story they told; she seemed to judge them by the soul in them, the amount of emotion they contained; and she was often quite curiously right, I thought. In this way and that the days passed, and for some time I was content to feel that our intimacy was growing happier, the lighter side of her nature was charming to me.

What surprised me most in her was that she did not at once lose that frank gayety of spirit I had noticed in her for the first time on the morning after her brother's recovery. Again and again she forced me to laughter by her quaint imitations of the faces and gestures we saw in street and café. Everything that was unreal or artificial struck her humor, and she was continually taking off the endless affectations of the Germans, the pomposness of the men and the trivialities of the women, with a power of mimicry that would have made her fortune on the stage. But though the humor was light and joyous, one felt every now and then piercing through it the contempt of a sincerer race, or at least of a race with a surer instinct and understanding of the art of living.

"The Germans," she said once, "are like their language, large, but ill-formed and awkward; disciplined mediocrities they all seem to me, and their women, hens, 'Cluck, cluck, cluck, kaffée klatsch!'" And her laughter had contempt and dislike in it.

And just as I noticed a seriousness behind her mimicry so I soon felt a deep melancholy underlying her almost feverish gayety. Sometimes she would brood for hours without speaking, till I roused her, in fact, and sometimes she would grow bitterly indignant at some little snobbism that seemed to me perfectly harmless. She was a *révoltée*, I told myself; but the changes in her of temper and nature fascinated me and day by day her beauty grew upon

me; for I now saw that she was beautiful or more than beautiful. The slim grace of her figure was as the swaying of a lily stem in water and her eager face with the soulful eyes and sensitive mouth was infinitely seductive.

From hour to hour passion grew in me till I lost count of all she did or said that did not feed my desire, and at last I spoke. We had spent the morning, I remember, with her brother and mother, and in the afternoon while they went shopping together, she and I drove out as by mutual consent along the river. She was in a strange mood; now she would rally me on my silence, and when I spoke, would herself begin to brood. We left the carriage at my impulse to avoid the coachman, and as we walked together in perfect solitude among the trees I tried to speak; but my mouth was parched as with fever. I stood still, and the scene rises again before me as I write. There within reach of me the slight figure, etched against the coppery reds and golds and greens of sunset. On this side of the sky, tones of turquoise and sapphire blended with the iris of mother-of-pearl, and on that side, cloud castles of fantastic architecture shot through by jets of flame glowed and faded in a final conflagration. I could not speak; I stretched out my arms and drew her to me, and turned her face up to mine and kissed her as if I would never part from her again. I was surprised at my own passion; for a moment or two she was wholly mine. As she moved away from me I asked her hungrily:

"Do you love me, Sonia? You know I love you."

Her eyes dwelt on mine with pitying tenderness; but in a moment she regained self-mastery.

"Yes; but—"

"But what?" I exclaimed. "What do you mean? What can separate us if we love each other? Every time you

give me a little of yourself, you take it back next time we meet. Why?"

"Don't say that," she cried appealingly; "I would give you anything, everything, gladly, if I were free."

"But you are free," I cried hotly. "You told me that you cared for no one else and are engaged to no one."

"Ah," she said, "don't let us talk and spoil the golden hours. Love me if you can and I will love you as I can. For a little while we are together, and the past is far away and affection's sweet!" And she laid her hand on my arm and gave herself to me in a look. I didn't understand her; but I drew her to me and kissed her mouth. The slim body fluttered in my hands as a bird flutters, and then was still; but as she felt me against her I saw the vivid flush rise in her cheeks and she began to draw herself away from me, slowly but irresistibly. I was conscious of the determination in her and let her go; for something told me that time was on my side and that the sweetness of our caresses would grow on her and not diminish. In silence we walked together and soon she took my hand and put it to her cheek, and we went on hand in hand like children, while my heart leaped in gladness and I could have thanked God for the winning of my imperious delight.

But my hopes fell very low in the days that followed. Again and again my passionate exclamation came back to me as the exact truth—whenever she gave me a little of herself, she seemed to take it back the next time we met. I had perpetually to reconquer her, and this intensified my desire and exasperated my nerves, till at times I was little better than an animal. Scarcely ever did she yield enough to call forth in me that divine tenderness which is the seventh heaven of passion.

It was about this time that she be-

gan to ask me about myself and my plans for my future life. Naturally I told her everything. I described the old days in the Union at Oxford, and said that I wanted to enter Parliament, hoping to do some little good. Somehow or other the more enthusiastically I talked, the colder she seemed to become. I could not account for it; and yet—God help me!—I tried to win her by exaggerating sympathies which were not the deepest in me. I told her of what had been done for the poor in England; I described the working of the Factory Acts and the poorhouses, and pointed out that more would have to be done; that pensions for the aged poor would be established by the state and all taxes on necessities would be abolished, while the taxes on luxuries would be greatly increased. It was all no good. She listened with a curious interest which was a part of her intellectual being, but behind the mask of sympathetic manner I felt a barrier of resolute indifference I could not explain or account for.

As the days went on and the date of our departure came nearer, she seemed to grow colder, more detached; she certainly yielded herself less to me. What was the mysterious influence that was drawing her from me? I asked myself in vain. Again and again I tried to win her; but her resolution stood firm. Now and then she'd let herself go to love for a moment; but the next moment she'd draw back. I was really half glad when our stay came to an end. André was completely cured, and his mother wished to spend the full summer in her country house. Just before starting my exasperated nerves gave way, and I reproached Sonia with her coldness, and told her that her reserve was drawing out the worst in me and not the best. As soon as I said that, she put her hand on my mouth and looked at me with such a passion of depreciation and re-

gret, that I choked my thoughts to silence. In vain I cudgled my brains for some explanation of her conduct; I could find none. It was really enough to drive one mad, the continual vain groping to understand the enigma; and yet the clew was to be given me sooner than I dared to hope.

We had resolved to go over Warsaw to Petersburg; for their country house — was only about thirty miles up the Neva from the capital. If I would, I could not describe the long journey from Vienna to Warsaw. I was chiefly occupied in amusing the mother and daughter and attending to their comforts, hoping vaguely in some way or other to make myself pleasant to them through companionship. The wish to ingratiate myself, which seemed to me a degradation and to some extent an abdication of my manhood, had come to me from that last fortnight in Vienna, in which the fear of losing my love had grown upon me like a nightmare. The journey was pleasant enough. André and his mother were interested in every detail, and that gave rest to Sonia and myself. We spent a night in Warsaw, in a huge, ill-furnished hotel, and the next day we were off again over the boundless bare plains that seemed to me so depressing. In the afternoon I remember we crossed the true Russian frontier at—I forgot the name of the station. As soon as we started again, I found on entering the train that Sonia had lowered the double windows in one part of the corridor and was leaning out. I walked up to her and half timidly put my hand on her shoulder. She did not draw away; for a moment or two she did not even seem to notice it, and then she turned to me with tears shining in her eyes and her whole face quivering.

"Russia," she said, "our Russia! Don't you love it? I love every bit of it. You said a little while ago in

Poland that the boundless plains were monotonous. My God, how could you have said that? There is the great earth, naked and fruitful where men labor, where they are born and live and die, and over them the heavens arched. 'Ugly,' you said. These plains ugly! And you talked of the need of wood and hill to make a scene beautiful, just like a landscape gardener. Ah, if it is ugly, I love its ugliness. Here at any rate one can take long breaths uncontaminated and feel oneself alone. I return to nature as to a mother when I get back to Russia, and feel myself at one with the earth and air and sky."

"But won't you think of England, Sonia?" I said. "And our lives there?"

"Oh!" she answered imperiously. "There it is again, England, England. But what can we do in England, I ask you? You told me that there were dozens of men from her universities, just like you—well-born, well-taught and far too well-dressed"—and she put her hand on me deprecatingly—"eager to enter Parliament, to extend the already overgrown British Empire and to debase poverty with the cast-off clothes and broken meats of waste. England is finished, I tell you"—and she sprang upright—"she is hidebound in her traditions and her past, and her conventions choke her; but here we have to make traditions. Think of that! We are not bound in any way; we are only asked to make our lives memorable. Ah! there is a thirst in me for great deeds. I hate your ordinary, commonplace life. There! It is said." And she began to move up and down like a caged wild thing, heedless of the people in the other compartments who stared out at her. In a moment or two she stopped by me again:

"Will no man be born like Russia, worthy of her?" And she put her hands on my shoulders and her passion swept her away.

"Don't you see how we want a man?" she cried. "Every nation wants one. Look at that accursed German emperor! Because the French stole Alsace from Germany, when he took it back again, he stole Lorraine with it. Lorraine, the country of Jeanne d'Arc! Lorraine that is all French, that is as much French as Berlin is German! The ignoble thief! And now he might give it back and give peace to the world as well and establish right as a sacred thing, and he is content to drill and dress and feed and sleep. Will no one kill the dog and make place for a better man?"

Her reckless violence shocked me. "His successor would be no better," I said; "probably worse."

"Not so," she said, with eager, pointing hand. "Were his father swept away terribly the son might listen to his conscience. The one great fact would bring him nearer to all other facts. Ah, to think of it! Any one of those Hohenzollerns by giving back Lorraine to France might win immortal reputation by a single generous act. There are two crowns before each of them—the heavy, hard gold symbol, and the exquisite circlet forged of peace and love and the gratitude of humanity. And they all choose the metal crown and strut through bowing apes and stand in God's sunshine without fear."

She seemed no longer conscious of my existence. Her speech was like a storm torn by flashes of hate and sarcasm.

"And here in Russia it is worse. We have a nincompoop as czar—an Alexander," she said bitterly, "when we want a great man. Was there ever such irony? The people ask him for liberty, for a patch of land, for ordered, peaceful life—space for their souls to breathe in—and he sits on their necks, choking them. And our people are so kind, so patient, so long-suffering. 'A good man!' they call him; it mad-

dens me to hear them. Will no one free us from the lies and liars?"

"Ah," I said, "you are kicking against the pricks. Every fine nature does that."

"And gets tired of doing it too, eh?" she said, sinking down into her seat wearily and staring again out of the window.

I did not know what to say. Her recklessness had surprised me—shocked me, too, a little. I moved to her and put my hand again on her shoulder. She sighed restlessly, but did not move, and so we stood for a long time together, till I went back to the others and left her still sitting there.

An hour or so afterward André looked out of the door and saw her, and turned again to his ordinary chatter with a shrug of the shoulders:

"Sonia is in one of her moods. To be severely left alone is the only cure."

But I could not take this philosophic view. I was still shaken by the passion with which she had spoken—shaken and surprised. What did it mean, this storm of enthusiasm, and what was to be the outcome of it? I could not guess. It was long before my heart began to beat equably again, and then I felt incapable of thought, exhausted, as one snatched up to the heights where living is a delirium.

It was late at night, and every one was waiting for the beds to be made up before she came in. She had evidently been crying. Her face was startling in its pallor; the eyes seemed half dead and drooping like flowers beaten by heavy rain. She made no attempt to conceal her tears, but simply sat down in her corner wiping her eyes, and sighing heavily from time to time. My heart wept with her; I longed to take her in my arms and kiss the tears away. She was unlike anybody else in the world, I thought, nobler at once and weaker. And so I tried to tell her as I said good night, bowing low before

her and kissing her hand with a strange mixture of tenderness and veneration. She understood my tacit sympathy, for as I lifted my head she took it in her hands and kissed me on the forehead before them all. I went out of the carriage trembling with emotion, prouder and happier than I had ever been in my life.

As the hours passed, however, my old self, that had been crushed and silenced by the whirlwind of her passion, slowly rose again and soon convinced me that Sonia was wrong—altogether wrong. I determined to persuade her that she was mistaken, to show her that what had been, must be; for the one unchangeable thing in the world is the nature of man, and that determines all his institutions. If the institutions are bad it is because of a corresponding vileness in mankind. One had as much right to complain of the top hat as of a king; both answered to some idiotic desire in man, or they would not exist.

We passed through Petersburg at night; it was quite eleven o'clock before we reached the little station four miles from their country house. We got to our journey's end in complete darkness, and I could see nothing but a long, low building. What I noticed this first night was the obsequious yet boisterous affection of a host of servants, male and female.

In the morning I saw the place better. Sonia—the gay Sonia, the Sonia I had known for one or two days in Vienna—had come to life again; she knocked at my door before I was half dressed, and cried to me to hurry down, for she wanted to show me everything.

How I wish I could paint her as I found her, framed in the French window against the dazzling sunshine of that summer morning. Always striking in appearance, she yet varied more in looks than most women; she was often almost plain, but now and then

her beauty struck me as pure witchery, and this happened to be one of her rare days. She always parted her hair at the side like a boy, which gave a strange, alert look to her face. And this look was quickened and deepened now by the incomparable warmth of her eyes into an expression so soulful and courageous that I only wanted to love and kiss her. Her dress always seemed to be perfectly simple and careless. I have been told that such dresses are the most costly, but I don't think that was true in her case. They often fitted badly, but the rounded grace of her figure was not to be disguised by a crease or a fold. The moment I came into the room she held out both hands to me, and then taking my arm whirled me out of doors. I was to see everything, and at once.

"But first you must know," she began breathlessly, "that this house was built a long time ago. In 1730 or 40 my great-grandfather, who had spent some years at the French court, came back to live here. He had forgotten his Russian, and had to curse the servants in French. Three quarters of the house was in existence before his time; but he determined to level it with the ground and build a palace here after the fashion of Versailles. He had the best intentions, the dear man! But the first thing was to have an avenue of trees, for trees take time to grow, so the trees must come first, he thought. The house, you see, faces north. My great-grandfather thought a house should face south; he therefore began to construct his avenue of trees from the kitchen door, meaning when he rebuilt the house to make the entrance there. Come, I will show it to you," and she swept me off round the house to a superb avenue of trees, which did indeed begin opposite the kitchen door, on the farther side of the great, unpaved, dirty yard. "Come along," she said, and we walked rapidly

down the avenue of alternate chestnut and acacia trees for more than half a mile. Some distance from the house the ground dropped suddenly, and when we got to the slope Sonia pointed out to me that the avenue ended in a swamp.

"Yes," she cried, laughing merrily, "my great-grandfather thought nothing of the swamp; when he came upon it he determined to drain it, and he set to work. You shall come and see the little summerhouse in it that I built in memory of the great André; for I have a sneaking regard—in spite of your wise counsels—for my half-mad great-grandfather, who would make avenues and drain swamps and build a Versailles here in the wilds. I see what you are thinking, sir," she went on, nodding her head with childish gaiety. "You are thinking that I like my great-grandfather because I am like him. It is perhaps true, you sober Englishman; but is not the avenue beautiful, though it is of no use and does not serve any purpose of parade? I love my avenue better because it is like no other avenue in the world. Here the trees grow and flower all by themselves, content to fill the air with perfume and take the eye with beauty. They would be covered with dust if we drove up and down between them. My grandfather's ideas of perfection have a good deal to say for themselves even in this world." And she looked at me with those strange, luminous eyes as if she had half divined my mental attitude.

I am glad to say that for the moment I did not feel inclined to argue, but replied merrily, "I think your great-grandfather a wonderful person, and his avenue quite beautiful. I suppose he meant to continue it to the high road?"

"Four versts off," she nodded gravely, "and he did too, but the swamp in the middle of it would not be drained, and there is about a hundred yards of

road made at the end of the avenue to run into the main road, and that's all. You see," she said, laughing, "French ideas could not survive in Russia; dear, lazy, happy-go-lucky Russia wouldn't have a Versailles and so my grandfather died before he had half carried out his plans." After a pause she added, in a lower tone, "Untamed and untamable Russia wasn't to learn French ways. Perhaps," she continued gravely, "it will show itself just as rebellious to English ideas and English ways."

But I would not be drawn. She was too perfect as she was; the day was too bright; I was too pleased to find her in such a happy mood to disturb it with arguments; so I laughed at her and with her, and we took our way back to the house and breakfast arm in arm.

But somewhere in the depths of me there was a desire to refute her arguments and convert her, and sooner or later I was bound to speak. We were in the little summerhouse, I remember, one afternoon with the swaying willow branches in front of us, when I began:

"I wonder, Sonia, if you would let me try to show you why I do not agree with your views about society and its reformation."

She turned to me with positive fear in her face, and clasping her hands on the table cried. "Oh, don't!" But a moment afterward she added:

"I knew it would come to speech. I knew it would. What a pity!"

"What do you mean?" I asked in surprise.

"Oh," she replied abruptly, "do you think we need to speak in order to be understood? I think we often feel things more clearly than words can render them. I knew your thoughts. I felt the antagonism in you all the while. Besides you have a way of your own of talking, my friend. When

you hear something you don't like, your brows go up, your jaws set, and your eyes flash; I'm not blind. But go on," she added, "I will listen. I sometimes wish I could be persuaded," she concluded wistfully.

I was discouraged at the outset. I felt that the attempt would make me lose ground with her, but it seemed to me merely honest to go on—a sort of duty to her and myself—so I did my best.

"You think institutions can be altered," I began, "because they don't suit you, don't accord with your ideas of right and justice and goodness. But institutions are there because men are what they are. The institutions are not made to suit you, Sonia, an extraordinary woman, but the average man, and they do suit him fairly well or he would alter them."

She did not reply, but I could see that she was listening. I went on in the same strain for some time; she heard me out in silence, and then replied in a gentle, hopeless, tolerant way:

"I think you answer yourself," she began. "You are still half a Christian, aren't you? Well, had not Jesus altered the world? Is He not altering still, making them ashamed of their brutal passions and brutish selfishness? Surely, my friend, you must see that you are on the wrong side, on the side of immobility, while I am on the side of progress. Men linger on the upward path to satisfy their baser appetites. You should not defend that."

I was not persuaded. "If man climbs fast," I began, "he falls back again. We English tried to go fast with Cromwell and fell back with Charles II. You would put a Cromwell out of breath. If we were to adopt your rate of progress we should need a Christ in every street."

"Even that does not seem impossible to me," she cried, starting to her feet and beginning to pace backward

and forward as if she needed a physical outlet for her emotion. "Nothing is impossible: there are no limits to what the soul may do. You talk of a Christ in every street; but you have forgotten that there is a woman in every house. Look what we have already done for the humanization and refinement of man, and what we are still doing. He is ashamed now to be dissolute and drunken; he will soon be ashamed of greed and self-seeking. Woman is gradually molding man to her ideal! For ages she has done it unconsciously; now that she is beginning to do it consciously the progress will be more rapid than you can imagine.

"Just as Russia is a new factor in the problem," she went on, after a pause, "so is woman. She is bound by no traditions. It is for her to make her own traditions. The women of to-day have to set the example; they will find followers! It was Jeanne d'Arc that made Charlotte Corday possible."

She had got into her habitual train of thought, and now she talked with a passion of spiritual exaltation that thrilled me in spite of myself.

"How men miss-see their saviors! No one has written a real life of Charlotte Corday, and yet she was the first of the great modern women, greater, I think, even than Jeanne d'Arc, for she had no faith to sustain her, only her own great heart. Don't you know what she said about her deed when the public prosecutor tried to make out that she was the assassin of a great and good man? 'I killed him,' she said, 'and he is dead. You cannot kill great men.' And she was right; she had killed him. After his death they started Marat hats in Paris, and Marat this and Marat that, but the vile worship could not last. Within the year his body was taken from the grave and tossed in dust to the winds! Charlotte Corday had killed him; he was dead."

There were tears in her voice and eyes as she spoke. It was all so real to her that I answered her half afraid:

"Surely you would not do evil—and such evil—that good might come."

She stopped with a great sigh and sat down at the table, shaking her head as if in utter hopelessness. I had to repeat my question; and then she replied slowly—half wearily:

"Do you ask that seriously? What a creature of convention you are! What a load you carry about with you of outworn moral platitudes! Would you take one life to save ten thousand? That's the question. I would. I would—gladly."

"You must not speak like that, dear," I said, putting my hand on her clasped hands.

She turned and looked at me with a great, glad resolve in her eyes that shocked me. A moment or two afterward she said, "Let us go into the air," and by a sort of unconscious agreement we began to talk of ordinary things. I made up my mind not to excite her again if I could help it; opposition seemed only to confirm her in her wild, impracticable enthusiasms.

For days and days my purpose of self-preservation held, and indeed the next serious talk that we had was wholly different. I had been noticing the way she waited on her brother, and her pleasure in the service. She tried to amuse him and interest him at home; she evidently dreaded the life of the capital for him. In fact, she told me once that she only stayed in the country house for Andrushka and because it suited her mother's health. Self-abnegation sat lightly on her; she seemed to take delight in it; I could not help telling her one morning how much I admired her for this.

"Oh," she cried, blushing, "don't praise me for unselfishness nor set me on a pedestal for anything! I am not worthy of it. I have had terrible fights

with myself; to make myself decent at all was hard. As a child I was a wretched little animal.

"You perhaps ought to know something," she went on; "at any rate, it will put you right about me, and take some of the dirty conceit out of me. As a child I was a sort of unconscious liar," and she flushed again. "I used to romance, say I had met people, and that they had said things to me, and my mother and André used to believe me, which encouraged me to go on. Of course, as I grew older I became a little ashamed of myself for this and tried to stop it, but it was very hard to break it off. I was always romancing, and once or twice I got caught or half caught, and nearly died of shame. But the world of my fancy was always as vivid to me as the real world, so I went on lying for years and years. Then I met that man I told you of, Michailoff. He first gave me faith in myself, faith that I could do something worth the doing, that I was one—" and again she flushed. "He taught me a great deal, too. I owe him much. Of course, I began to make a hero of him, began to care for him, and then found out that he was base—a brute, and a liar. He was making up to one I had thought my friend, Hetty Helfmann, all the time he was telling me that I was the only woman in the world for him. A liar! But it was the faith he had given me in myself that made me hate my lying, so I made up my mind to say every sentence over to myself and see whether it was true, before I uttered it. That makes my speech slow very often, even now. Ah, you have noticed it," she cried, looking at me.

"I have noticed the abruptness of speech," I answered, "and the pauses, without understanding the reason. It always seems to me that you ought to speak very quickly."

"I used to," she went on; "lies come

quickly off the tongue; it is the exact truth that is slow. I often exaggerate still. But that does not matter now; nothing matters now. Besides," she began, as if falling into a new train of thought, "I have not the vestige of a desire now to deceive any one in the world. But I must go down to the village. No, you cannot come with me; it would only hurt them," and off she started on some mission of kindness.

Our next talk was about this village and the poor in it. Her mother had said at luncheon that it was silly to waste money on the villagers; for there was no gratitude in them.

"I don't do it for a reward, mother," Sonia replied.

"Why do you do it?" I asked curiously.

"To appease my sympathy, I think," she said, "and because they need it."

"Need it indeed!" sniffed the mother. "What nonsense!"

"The whole dispute, mother, was about the laundress and what you paid her. I said that her prices were very cheap, for by rights she should be paid what you would give, rather than do the work yourself. But you only give what competition—that is, the necessities of the poor—compel them to accept. I say that is as much theft as any other robbery by force. We are worse than thieves, too, for we rob without running any risk. I am sick of it all—the poor degraded by poverty and the rich debased by luxury and power."

"Yet One said that the poor would always be with us," I interjected.

She turned on me at once. "I don't think the poor suffered when He was with them."

"Oh, I am so glad, Mr. Lascelles," said the mother, "that you are taking her to task. She keeps the whole village; it is absurd. And look how she is dressed—ridiculous! She owes it to her position and name to be properly

dressed. But no! She would rather play *Lady Bountiful* to a pack of cunning ne'er-do-wells."

While the mother was speaking, a verse that I read at Oxford came into my head, the verse of a woman poet: *They shall take all to buy them bread; take all I have to give. I, if I perish, perish; they to-day shall eat and live.*

The feeling of Christina Rossetti was the same as that of Sonia; but something in me that I thought was reason fought against the emotions and I used my knowledge against my sympathy. I don't know why I did it; I was warned by the look in Sonia's face, but I could not refrain from adding something that I thought effective to my argument of the day before.

"It is curious," I said, "how every spiritual movement has its drawbacks. The crusades were due to a wave of spiritual enthusiasm, and the crusaders brought back with them to Europe the vilest disease known to our civilization. Curious, too, how material progress is bound up with spiritual advancement; men accumulate wealth, and art immediately comes to humanize them."

"Pure skepticism—all that," replied Sonia sharply. "Skepticism that has never done anything good in the world. It merely lames right action; it should be called the devil's advocate. You are always on the wrong side, my friend."

I was wounded by the coldness in her voice, and so I persisted:

"After all," I said, "it is not skepticism but plain truth that our social laws—payments, punishments and the rest—are merely the outcome of the forces, the men and women who make up the community. The height of a pyramid must bear a proportion to the breadth of the base, and the base must always rest on the ground—in the mud."

"It is false," Sonia cried, starting up and speaking with astonishing ve-

hemence. "False and vile. You make life mechanical. You crush the soul. How can you take that side? I can't endure it!" And she left the room.

"Don't mind, Mr. Lascelles," said the mother soothingly; "she will get over her tantrums soon."

"That's just like Sonia," said André. "She keeps us all here for our health, eh, mother? But I believe it is because she likes to play queen to those cursed villagers. I'm sick of the place," and he yawned.

As soon as I decently could, I went after Sonia, whom I found in the avenue. I walked with her, but as soon as I began to speak, she cried:

"No more arguments, my friend, no more arguments. You are you, and I am I. In either case the tree has got to its full height now and cannot be bent or altered. Words have no effect on our natures. Character is not to be changed by a little breath. It was folly to think that.

"No, no," she went on, preventing me from speaking, "I will not hear you again. I understand now. Your English view of life is Chinese. You accept what you call 'facts'—the lower the better. Your society is all mechanical, caged in conventions; you excuse your selfishness by talking of necessity—"things are because they must be"—and you choke us with 'what is, shall be.' I will not have it. I don't believe it. The world to me is fluid, men and women malleable—everything noble is possible."

"But think," I cried, "you contradict yourself. You have just argued that character is stable, and cannot be altered by mere arguments. Now you say we are infinitely malleable."

"What do I care for contradictions?" she replied impatiently. "I see both sides of the shield, that is all. But in the main I am against you, against you heart and soul. I think nobly of

men and you think ignobly of them. Each time that I talk with you I go away with my soul fainting and weak. Yes, I must say it. I know that if I married you and went to England, I should live a life of ease and comfort, and at every turn my woman's vanity would be tickled and pleased. I should be made much of and everything would go well with me. You care for me too and are kind and good. But the soul in me would die. I should pass my life ignobly, and—God help me—perhaps I should get to love my prison of scented cotton wool. That frightens me. The soul in me would die there, I tell you—the enthusiasm and the resolution—and I live for them and for nothing else. I would rather suffer a thousand deaths than give up my beliefs; they redeem me to myself." And she turned from me and walked quickly into the house.

As she went, fear fell upon me, abject fear. I had lost her. What a fool and brute I was! I had spoken against my feelings too; she was right, and again the line came back and sang itself in my ears:

I, if I perish, perish; they to-day shall eat and live.

Almost I resolved to seek her out and tell her that there should be no more controversy, no more disagreement between us, that I would work with her. But something masculine in me rebelled against this as weakness; and reason—or perhaps dialectic—began to furnish me with arguments against her. There could be no doubt that in the main the poor were incapable and wastrels and the well-to-do industrious and provident—that was the truth to anchor to.

I spent the whole day and nearly the whole night fighting with myself, heart against head, and only won rest by persuading myself that Sonia couldn't give me up. The fear that she might do so was baseless, I argued; I had

never heard nor read of such abandonment for a mere idea.

But next day I had difficulty in finding her. She avoided me. When I asked after her I was told by the servant with uplifted hands and eyebrows, that she was probably locked in her room, that nobody could find her. I was conscious that these were only excuses, but consoled myself with the idea that I should see her at the midday meal and then get a chance to talk to her. The hours went by on feet of lead. At last the bell rang for lunch. I was more than disappointed—I was heartsick with fear, when I saw that she was not in her place and that no one seemed to notice her absence. I asked after her and was told that she had probably eaten in her room. André was almost certain that he had seen her going out walking as he came down to dinner. Immediately the meal was over, I went among the outdoor servants and found this was true; Sonia had gone out by herself and might be away the whole day, they said.

All that afternoon I spent wandering about the house—like a dog without its master, as I thought to myself bitterly—waiting, looking, longing for the form that never came; and all the while my fear grew, the fear of irreparable loss.

The long summer day dragged to its end; the rose lights faded out of the sky; the gathering shadows chilled me. It was ten o'clock before I saw her coming up the avenue; and, strange to say, as soon as I saw her, my fears fled and a sort of irritation and anger took their place. How could she hurt me so? I would not go to meet her; I would stand and let her come to me. She was in the wrong, not I. But when she saw me—and she did not see me till she was within twenty yards of me, for I was in the shadow of the trees—she stopped too, and for a mo-

ment made as if she would leave the avenue and go into the house by the side door through the orchard. That hurt me inexpressibly, and with the pain my fears came back to me with a rush; all the irritation vanished and I went quickly to her with a reproachful:

"Sonia, I have waited all day for you."

When I saw her face, I was tenfold more pitiful. It was pale and drawn with great violet rings round the eyes; she had evidently been crying.

"Oh," I went on hurriedly, "Sonia, what have I done? Let us love each other and think of nothing else. It is too terrible to be parted from you." As she nodded slowly, I took her in my arms. I was glad she did not speak. I went on talking to comfort her, telling her how I had waited and longed for her and how glad I was to see her; but I suddenly noticed that although she was very gentle and let her hand rest in mine, she was walking steadily to the house, and when I tried to restrain her, she looked up at me with brave eyes and said quietly:

"I am worn out, George; I must rest."

"Of course, of course," I said, again walking on by her side. "But you will see me to-morrow, won't you? I want to be with you." I would not even say that I wanted to talk to her for fear of alarming her, and she bowed her head in agreement. As we came to the house, I kissed her hand:

"Good night, Sonia." She seemed to bend her head just a little as she passed through the door.

To describe the conflict of my feelings that night would be impossible to me. As is usual, I fear in such cases, I began by blaming myself, and as her influence on me faded I ended by blaming Sonia. After all she was unreasonable; the poor *were* the wastrels and the rich *were* the efficient. Of

course, there were exceptions, numberless exceptions, but that was the rule and the rule made for progress, for right. I would not disguise my convictions on that point; it would be treason to my intelligence. But then all my resolution was shaken by the memory of her pitiful, pale face, and I resolved to be as sweet to her as I could be, to make everything easy for her; for I loved her and I had no doubt in spite of what had passed that she loved me. And loving each other I felt sure that all would come right—in time.

I did not see her in the forenoon, but word was brought to me from her about eleven o'clock that she would be down to lunch and would see me in the afternoon. After lunch we went out and, by some unconscious agreement, walked round the house and down the avenue to the summerhouse in the swamp, Sonia's favorite place. She seemed very quiet, unnaturally quiet. That brought back my fears, and the conflict going on within me, the old conflict between my head and my heart, confused me; but when we were seated in the summerhouse and the brave, sad eyes looked at me, I knew what to say—the truth. I would tell her the simple truth. And I did, and she listened to me to the end without a word; only when I told her how I had doubted her love, she stroked my head with her hand pitifully. Helped by that cue I dwelt on my love for her and her love for me. I could not help saying at the end:

"If I lost you, Sonia, now, I should go mad, I think. I know I should not care for anything else in the world or be worth anything; I should be given over to the devil."

At once her brows knit and her face grew cold.

"You must not talk like that," she said; "it is not true, I am sure."

"But you see what I mean," I cried, shifting my ground quickly. "In heart

I am with you altogether, and my brain sympathizes with much that you say. Give me a little time. Whatever you wish to do for the poor shall be done, whatever you wish to give to them, shall be given. Together we will fight every abuse, every injustice. I will try to live as you would have me live; but you must not speak of leaving me; that hardens me, brings out all the worst in me."

She shook her head slowly. "Oh, my friend," she said, and there was infinite tenderness and regret in her voice, "the trouble is deeper, far deeper. Don't let us deceive ourselves. You are an Englishman and I am a Russian—that's the real difficulty. You could only be happy and strong and at your best in England, and I cannot give up Russia. Look!" And she spoke hurriedly. "Before I met you I was bound to her in a hundred ways, by a hundred ties. Over there in Petersburg there are men and women who need me and I have promised myself to them. I cannot draw back now."

"But how would our love and marriage interfere with that?" I asked, with a terrible sinking at heart, a terrible dread.

"What right," she answered, "have I to sacrifice you? None; I should ruin your life, blast it. By what right?"

"By the right," I broke in, "that I wish it, that I am eager to give it."

She put her hand on my mouth. "Hush, hush," she said. "I am not willing. I could not work with you beside me. My own life is mine to break and throw away as I please; but yours—oh, I could do nothing if you were there. I should be a coward for you, and I shall need all my courage."

"What do you mean?" I asked harshly, feeling myself grow pale with anger. In some way or other I was certain then that her resolution was irrevocable. "I offer to share your life

whatever it may be. You tell me that you will not accept my companionship. Then you don't love me. If you loved me, you could not speak like that."

"Ah," she cried wildly, "why do you tempt me and torture me?" And with a supreme effort at self-control, she rose and came over to me, and I drew her down on my knee and she laid her head beside mine.

"Don't say such things," she said to me. "You mustn't even think them. I love you too well," she whispered. "I love to put my face against yours. Hush, don't look," she went on, holding my head, for I tried to draw away from her to look at her. "If you look, I can't tell you. But when you touch me, George, when our hands meet just by chance, I thrill from head to foot; all my body cries for you. Ah, God, if I did not love you, how easy it would all be! How easy it would be to part from you and never see you again and go on with my work. But now it is hard, so hard," and her voice had a pitiful break in it. "It is worse than death to leave you; but I must, I must. My work calls me, my work——"

She put my head from her resolutely and stood up with her hands in front of her face, and as she shook the tears away, she walked out of the hut. I sat and saw her go. What was there to say? I felt an immovable resolution in her, and I was exhausted with the strain. There I sat in the hut with my dead hopes about me, my heart aching and my brain numb. I could feel nothing, could not think; but the verse sang itself in my ears with a sort of insane exaltation:

I, if I perish, perish; in the name of God I go.

How long I stayed in the hut I don't know. I left it like a wounded animal, with one fear in me—that I should go mad; with one wish—to tire my body to a rag and then sleep. I walked for hours, driving myself on whenever I

noticed that my pace slackened, and yet with some unconscious purpose of making a round and getting back to the house at last. It was after midnight when I returned. The short summer night was quickening to the dawn and I was glad of it; it had been a terrible day; I was glad to have done with it—glad.

When I awoke I felt perfectly refreshed and curiously composed and contented. There was a little dull pain about my heart I noticed, but that would go off, I thought, with delight, and I pulled the curtains back and threw the window up and stretched myself in the sunlight. I even went so far as to jest with myself; if Sonia did not care for me, perhaps some one else would, and if no one would, a state of single blessedness was not so bad, after all. There was nothing to be gained by crying over spilt milk and inscrutable women. As I got out of my tub, I whistled. The cold water had done me good, brought me back completely to the realities of existence. There is sunshine in life, I said, and rubbed myself hard. Nothing like exercise, sleep and a cold bath for us English, I exulted; so we chase away fevered dreams and despairs. I dressed quickly. But when I had dressed, the thought of meeting Sonia came to me with a shock of fear that almost unnerved me. My mind was made up, however, and in a moment I had regained self-control and passed resolutely downstairs. There was no one in the sitting room, so I went out into the orchard. I would not go back to the avenue. No, I would walk about under the trees, and not think at all but enjoy the sunshine and the song of birds. There, an hour later, a servant found me; he brought me a letter. As I opened it, I felt my heart turn to water; I knew it was from Sonia; it was very short.

DEAR ONE: It would be better for us not to meet again for some time. I am suffering

so much that I must beg you to give me time and solitude to let me come to myself; I could not meet you now. You will go to Petersburg, I know, to-day, and later perhaps we may meet calmly.

She who loves you.

SONIA.

I folded the letter up again and smiled at the messenger like a mandarin, and wondered as I walked away under the trees why I did not fall; for sky and earth were whirling round me, and I could have screamed with the pain. In a few moments I came to reason. So this was my dismissal; curt enough, and complete enough. Rage came into me; I turned and walked hastily to the house, and in ten minutes I had packed my things. Then I sat down to write to her.

"Your wishes shall be followed, Sonia," I wrote; but I could not close the letter there as I wanted to; my heart would not let me; in spite of myself I added, "But I rely on your promise that we shall meet again. I shall be at the —— Hotel."

I signed it boldly, "Your lover,  
George Lascelles."

It suddenly came to me that I could not meet her mother and brother without betraying myself. I would write to them, too; and I wrote, hinting clearly to the mother that it was Sonia's will that I should go at once and not mine, and giving my address very carefully at the —— Hotel in Petersburg, as I had given it to Sonia. To the brother I wrote still more briefly, thanking him for his kindness to me, and hoping that he would let me see him when he came to town.

In the afternoon of that day I was in Petersburg. I immediately dressed myself for dinner and went off to the embassy. I must hunt up one of our fellows there, I thought; I could not dine by myself: my memories were terrible company. I dined with Green—the Green who has since made a name for himself in diplomacy—and a jolly

good dinner we had, I remember. I enjoyed everything at the Restaurant Français: the careful service, the excellent food, and the undeniable champagne. I had said to myself that I wouldn't think, and I didn't; I simply chattered to Green and listened to his chatter, and did myself right well.

Looking back, as I am now doing, it seems to me that the most curious point in my mental condition at this time was the fact that at first I did not suffer. On the contrary, I felt a sense of relief, and this relief was not chiefly due to the merging of anxiety into certainty, but was positive and substantial. For days and days I was like a schoolboy just released from school. I can only explain this feeling by comparing Sonia's exaltation of mind to living high up a mountainside where the air is thin and mere breathing an exertion. I had been mentally on the strain for weeks, and now that the tension was over I went back with delight to the old, easeful way of life.

This relaxation had one consequence which at the moment I did not think of, but which in the long run became of the greatest importance. When I left—I meant to write to Sonia within the week. At the back of my mind, indeed, I intended to write to her frequently; but the people at the embassy were extremely kind to me; the old life, with its calls, dinners, and parties, very engrossing, and so I put off writing. At the end of a fortnight it was harder to write than at the end of the week, because I should have had to excuse or explain my silence, and I did not feel inclined to invent lies. There was a little pique at the bottom of me, I suppose, toward Sonia, which strengthened my disinclination to write; she had thrown me over, and my paltry vanity took pleasure in sulking. For three or four weeks I went on comfortably enough. But as soon as my mind had rested and my spirits had regained

their tone, the society I was moving in began to pall upon me; the women seemed to me silly and frivolous; the men bored me. How was it, I asked myself, that before Sonia took off the German *Frauen*, I had never noticed how like women were to hens? They strutted about and made little noises exactly like hens; their faces, too, had some strange family likeness to the faces of hens, and their voices and manners reminded me of a farmyard. Again and again I burst out laughing at some unhoiyl resemblance of this sort, and my merriment was sometimes difficult to account for.

As mixed society grew more and more tedious to me, I withdrew from it and began to give men's dinners. But soon the men, too, struck me as affected and painfully dull; their conversation was as matter-of-fact as the intercourse of animals, and I felt rising in me a sense of contempt and indignation which I had never felt before and which I had no right to feel, I who a few months before would have condemned intellectual conversation as bad form, a sort of showing off. In sheer disgust at the tedium of my fellows I withdrew from society altogether, and began to live entirely alone. I worked a little at Russian, but found the days drag. In the slow, heavy hours of solitude Sonia's face came back to me, and the sense of my loss grew to pain, a pain of every moment, an aching desire that increased in intensity, and seemed at length to change the very nature of my mind.

Instead of condemning Sonia I began to condemn myself, and at length I could only escape from misery by putting Sonia on a pedestal as one of the most extraordinary women in the world, and so excusing in part my own stupid resistance to her influence. For now I saw clearly that she had been right and that I had been mistaken, that the cause of progress and reform

was the only cause for a man to defend, and that I had sinned against the light in trying to damp her enthusiasm. I took a pleasure now in going into the poorer districts of Petersburg and helping poverty here and there, as I thought Sonia would have liked me to do. The destitution and misery I found on every side strengthened my newborn feelings and brought me more and more into sympathy with Sonia's revolt. Indeed, so close did I come to her in sympathy that one day I sat down and wrote her a long letter, setting forth much of what I have put down here, but particularly dwelling on the change in me, my conversion, I called it; and in truth it was a conversion, for never again was I able to think the old individualistic thoughts or to live the old life entirely devoted to selfish enjoyment. I sent the letter to their country house. It was André who told me to send it there. From time to time I still came across him in the fashionable quarter. He could never tell me where his sister was or what she was doing; or, perhaps, he would not tell me, though I am inclined to think he could not, for he did not appear to take the slightest interest in what she was doing or where she was staying.

"She is always about with dirty workmen," he said, "or with women whose hair has been cut short and who look like ill-dressed boys. I can't stand the set. She'll get herself locked up, if she doesn't look out."

And so he went his way, burning his little bit of candle at both ends.

After waiting a fortnight or so, I got an answer from Sonia. The letter was lying on my table one afternoon when I came in. How hungrily I read the address, how I played with my delight! I would not open the letter, I would touch it just where her hand had touched it, and I ended by kissing it again and again in a wild rapture. Her mere influence trans-

ports one beyond reason, I thought with a smile. At length I tore the envelope open and read:

Your letter made me glad for you and sorry for our fate. It will be better for us not to meet yet.

Yours in all sympathy and affection,  
SONIA.

After writing as I had written, I must have felt sure that she would give me a meeting, for her letter was a terrible disappointment. For some days everything was weary, flat and unprofitable to me; and then I began to work again at my Russian in the morning, and in the afternoon to go out among the poor.

One of the first days I went out I had rather a curious adventure. In a workman's restaurant where I sometimes dined, I found a pretty and rather well-dressed girl of Jewish type seated almost opposite my accustomed place. She spoke to me first, I think, but I really paid so little attention to the matter that I could not be sure. She was pretty, very pretty, in a sort of rich, sensuous way, but she did not appeal to me. She seemed affected and a little common; but she evidently knew the poor and the poorer districts of Petersburg intimately, and I could not help admitting that she was not only well educated but well read. Almost at the beginning of our conversation, I remember, the talk fell on Turgenieff's "Fathers and Sons" and his extraordinary picture of Bazarov, the Nihilist. But the girl would not accept Bazarov as a representative of the reform movement in Russia, and her criticism had something in it.

"Bazarov," she said, "is a hard, selfish brute, while the very essence of the reform movement is unselfish devotion to others. If you only knew some of the real leaders of reform—Bakounine's nephew, for instance, or Michailoff—they are Nihilists if you like."

I pricked up my ears at the name.

"Ah," I said, "tell me about Michailoff, will you? Do you know him well?"

She cast her eyes down in a little confusion that seemed to me chiefly pretense, as I asked her whether she knew Michailoff; but in a moment she regained her self-possession and said demurely:

"At one time I knew him very well. He is an extraordinary man and devoted to the cause. You ought to meet him."

"I should like to," I replied coldly. "But cannot you tell me about him, what he does, how he shows his devotion?"

"He was left fairly well-off, you know," she began. "His father was a shopkeeper, I think, in Little Russia; but he lives just like a workman, allows himself only ten rubles a week, and gives all the rest to the Nihilist propaganda. He is sure to be arrested one of these days."

This last phrase convinced me that she knew Michailoff better than she wished to appear to know him. I was right; she tried again and again to find out from me where I had heard of him and why I took an interest in him; but her whole being was common and insincere and I told her nothing.

I did not return to the restaurant for a fortnight; but when I went back again, I found her in the same place as before. That gave me pause, made me vaguely suspicious, and put me on my guard with her. She seemed over-dressed now and coarser than ever, but she met me with a great show of frankness.

"I must introduce myself," she said, almost as soon as I sat down. "My name is Hetty Helfmann." I bowed and told her my name.

"I remembered what you said," she began, "about wishing to meet some of the real leaders of the revolutionary party, but they naturally avoid strangers, and Michailoff is so taken

up with his new flame that I could not get him to promise to give us even an hour of his valuable time."

"Indeed," I replied coldly; but she went on, with affected carelessness:

"It is Sonia this and Sonia that with him now. He can talk of nothing else." And her eyes searched me as she spoke.

I felt myself flushing; but if I could not control my blood, I could my tongue, and I did not give her the satisfaction of asking a single question about Sonia. I would not bring her name again on those lips. I was put to it to turn the conversation, but found the easiest way was to talk to Miss Helfmann about herself; and so I began with awkward directness to praise her hat and dress, knowing, with my newborn insight into women—insight that was half contempt—that she would take a compliment to her hat as if it were paid to herself. She was delighted, and kept asking for more sweets, like a greedy child. I gave them to her till I thought her appetite for flattery should be satisfied, and then got up and regretted that I'd have to go away. She tried in vain to keep me, and when I persisted that I had an appointment, she betrayed herself:

"By the way, I forgot," she said; "I wanted to tell you that Michailoff is always to be found now, at the afternoon meetings, in a house in — Street. His new mistress goes there, too, I believe; she is thinner than ever, and dresses down to Michailoff's taste."

I put on an affectation of interest as if I were trying to seem interested and was not, and went away with the sound of her malicious laughter in my ears. She had evidently given the address in order that I might go to one of the meetings—probably with the hope that I might turn out to be a closer friend of Sonia's than Michailoff would like.

I found myself saying, "She would stop at nothing, that woman, nothing!" and I made up my mind to warn Sonia.

But then her last letter came into my mind, and in the light of what the cursed Jewess had said I began to think she no longer cared for me. Of course, the Jewess' story was all lies; Sonia was not Michailoff's mistress; but it was strange that she should meet him, after speaking of him as base and a liar. She went on meeting him, too; I was sure the Jewess had told me the truth in this particular; for, by giving me the time and the place of the meeting, she had given me the power of verifying her story. The poison got into my blood and worked there—Sonia and Michailoff together every afternoon; Sonia, who would not meet me, who would not take the trouble to write me more than two or three lines. Strange, too, how she knew that private room in the Vienna restaurant. Was I doing her wrong by the suspicion? Perhaps. Perhaps not, too. What did I know about her, after all? One thing was certain; she was with Michailoff every afternoon. I did not write to warn her. I put it off.

Those meetings of mine with the Jewess must have taken place in October, for it was December and the terrible northern winter had laid icy hands on the city before anything else happened to me of note. By this time I had got to understand Russian and to speak it a little, and I used to move about with much greater freedom than heretofore.

One afternoon I had been in the poorer quarters and was hurrying back to the hotel, for it had begun to snow, when I saw a figure moving before me that I could not mistake even in the gloom. It set all my pulses throbbing; it was Sonia, I felt sure. I walked a little more rapidly and drew up to within fifteen or twenty yards of her and was certain; no one else moved like that. At the sight my anger and suspicion melted away. For some reason or other I was conscious that

the story told of her, and my suspicions of her were alike unworthy and false. I was surprised to find how glad I was to see her, how much I wanted to speak to her, to meet her once again, to take measure of the distance she and I had traveled since the summer; and I quickened my pace. Suddenly I thought, "If I speak to her in the street, she may choke me off," and then the thought of the "meeting" came to me and at once it seemed the better plan to follow her to the "meeting," for then I should see her for perhaps half an hour and certainly have a talk with her at the end.

We carry, I notice, the mental atmosphere of our home with us wherever we go. A "meeting" the Jewess had said, and the impression left on my mind was that of a political meeting such as might take place among radicals in England. If I had exercised my thought upon the matter consciously, I should have known that this was not the case; but I did not like to think about it, and so the word took its meaning from the associations of my past.

Sonia walked on rapidly without looking behind her, and it was with a shock that I found myself passing by the side of the Fortress Peter and Paul and then turning into a narrow street behind it. Evidently the Jewess had given me the right address. In a minute or two more Sonia entered a house with just a nod to the police watchman at the door. I followed within half a dozen yards of her. The man started up as if to stop me; but I had quickened my pace to overtake Sonia, and I suppose the intention to speak to her was already in my face, for he let me pass without a word. On the second landing I was at her heels. Her name was almost on my lips when she opened a door and went into a room; before she could close the door I had passed in after her, saying "Sonia."

She turned and saw me, but before

she spoke, before she turned, I had time to realize that the meeting was not such a meeting as I had unconsciously expected. The room was a large one, almost destitute of furniture; there was no ikon in it, I noticed, and the stove had evidently only been lit a short time, for they still kept the door of it open to get a draft and some of the smoke had blown through the room and made it look particularly comfortless. But what surprised me was that the room had fifteen or twenty men in it and no women at all, and it was evident at first glance that these men were of a better class than their clothes would lead one to believe. Some were dressed like common workmen, others like artisans, others again like poor clerks, but one look at their faces showed that many of them were masquerading.

As Sonia entered the room, a man detached himself from the group and came toward her. I put him down at once in my mind as Michailoff—a man about thirty-five, of medium height, with small, golden-brown mustache. He was very good looking—distinguished looking even—in spite of his clothes.

As Sonia turned to me, she cried in wonder, "You here! Did you follow me?" The emphasis she laid on the word "follow" made me flush hotly.

"I did," I replied. The astonishment visible in the men's faces, and the angry surprise of Michailoff prevented me showing the embarrassment I felt and gave me self-control. "I did," I repeated; "but your friends"—and I pointed to the circle—"do not seem pleased to see me." I would let them understand, at any rate, that I was not desirous of conciliating them.

"This is no place for you," she said hurriedly. "You should not have come here. You must go away at once."

"Not at once, surely," said Michailoff, coming forward and speaking in Russian. "We must know who the gentle-

man is and how he found his way here."

b. Sonia answered him in Russian shortly:

"I will be responsible for him;" and then turning to me she said in French:

"But now you must go at once."

"I understood what your friend said," I remarked quietly, "and also what you answered; but I do not see why you should make yourself responsible for me. I saw you walking before me, I followed you at a short distance—surely there is no crime in that." I spoke in Russian so that they might all understand. I wanted to defy them all—all these men who met Sonia every day and could be with her hour after hour when she would not give me five minutes. I suppose she felt the antagonism between me and the others, for she simply said to them: "I will be back immediately," then took me by the arm, saying, "Come with me," and drew me outside the door.

We were alone together, and the outside world fell away from me. Later I knew that as soon as the door closed upon us there arose inside the room a hubbub of indistinguishable voices; but at the moment I was unconscious of this; Sonia was with me and that was enough. I had no time to think of what I should say, so what I did say came from my unconscious self, from the heart.

"I want to see you, Sonia," I cried, "and your letter was so cold."

Her eyes did not yield to me. She remarked bitterly:

"I suppose your new friend, Miss Helfmann, told you where you would find me?"

Instead of answering the accusation and confirming her suspicion, I simply thought of clearing myself:

"She is no friend of mine," I replied hotly. "A vulgar Jewess. Since I saw her the second time, I have never been again to the restaurant I met her in.

You cannot have thought that I would care to meet such a creature."

I spoke hotly, but it was warm at my heart that Sonia did care about my intercourse with the Jewess. At once she melted to me, and with the old gesture I loved so much, she stretched out both hands to me, and as I took them and kissed them again and again, she said:

"I believe you; you speak the truth always. How good it is to be able to trust. But now you must really go. You are in danger here."

"Danger," I questioned, "from your friends?"

She flushed to the temples, and I could have kissed her for it.

"Yes," she replied bravely; "but don't ask me why or wherefore. Promise me that you will never speak of this place again, or of our meeting here. Not to any one—and I will meet you again. I always meant to give you a meeting." And her eyes rested on mine.

"If that's a promise, Sonia," I said, "I can go on working cheerfully and wait your time."

"It is a promise," she said simply. But I could not part from her like that; as she turned to go I threw my arms around her, and drew her to me, and kissed her on the forehead and on the hair, and said again and again:

"I love you, I love you, I love you, my heart's delight!"

A moment later she had wound herself out of my arms, and with the words, "Remember your promise," had disappeared into the room. The noise ceased as she entered, and as the door closed, everything was still and solitude came about me; but my heart was glad as I went down the stairs, and out into the night. It was dark now and snowing heavily; but what did I care for the darkness and cold; I was in paradise warmed and lighted and gladdened with hope.

For some time after this meeting I was content and happy; Sonia's warmth to me and her promise to see me again, brightened life for me; but as the days grew to weeks, and the weeks to months, I became despondent. I never fell into the utter misery that possessed me before; I had one consolation now that I had previously lacked—I wrote to her regularly. True, she did not answer me; but I knew that my letters would be a tie between us and so I kept them up. As the weeks grew into months, however, my letters, I am afraid, became rarer.

I noticed now that there were all sorts of rumors of Nihilist conspiracies flying about, but they had little or no effect on the gayeties of the capital, and I paid little heed to them. I read a good deal in the winter evenings, and went a good deal to the theater. I was amused by the love of dancing shown by this northern people; the ballets in the theater often lasted the whole evening, and there were sometimes as many as three or four hundred dancers together on the stage. Russia is the only country in Europe in which dancing is still regarded as one of the fine arts. But, after all, the reading of the modern Russian writers, Tolstoi, Dostoevsky, and Turgenieff, was my chief occupation and pleasure.

One evening, I remember, I had got hold of Tolstoi's "Cossacks," or rather the story had got hold of me. The wish to finish it kept me up late, and I had only closed the book a few moments when a knock came at my door. I called out, and to my astonishment the night porter came in, saying:

"There's a lady for you, sir."

"A lady," I repeated, utterly bewildered. "I don't know any lady. You must be making a mistake."

"Oh, no, he's not," said a voice I knew well, and Sonia passed him and came into the room. There she stood in a great white-fur wrap that hid

everything except her face. I could not realize it; it was too sudden; I was hardly able to believe my eyes.

She put the hood from off her head, and taking the great fur in both hands threw it backward from her on a chair; she was in ball dress.

"Have you no welcome for me?" she asked, holding out both her hands. The old familiar gesture brought me to myself and gave me words.

"Welcome!" I said, and took her cold hands in mine and pressed them against my heart. "Welcome!" She smiled as if pleased with my emotion and I went on, "I never knew before, Sonia, why jewelers make their boxes so uncouth and shapeless outside; it is to show off the exquisite beauty of the jewel within; and so with you, you witch! That uncouth great wrap sets off your loveliness!"

And indeed at the moment I was overpowered with the sense of her physical seduction. The charm of it came over me as a perfume sometimes comes, with such excess of sweetness that it makes one giddy. I could feel my mouth parching as I looked at her.

Suddenly a thought occurred to me—a poisonous thought.

"But this is not the meeting you promised me, is it?" I asked, and I held her from me in sudden dread.

"Yes, dear," she replied, "the only one I could give you without hurting you."

"Hurting me!" I repeated bitterly, all the disappointment of my long solitude welling up in me. "You think a great deal of my suffering, don't you? When a letter from you—three careless lines—would have made me so happy that angels would have envied me, and yet you kept silent and sent me not a word—seventeen weeks and not one little word!"

"Also for fear of hurting you." And the great eyes forced me to believe her though I didn't see how it could

be true. "But I have come now and I want to tell you how good your letters were to me, how sweet they were, the only sweet things in my life since I last saw you."

But the fear of her going away was upon me and prevented me giving myself up to the happiness.

"But now," I said, "you will have to go. Your carriage is waiting, of course; it would compromise you if you stayed more than a few moments in a hotel at this time of night."

She drew her hands from me and walked to the fire before she spoke.

"I am cold," she began in a thin, toneless voice, "and you make it colder with your little rags of convention. Sometimes I think of you as going about in your baby clothes. Can you never get rid of them altogether?" And she turned to me with the old imperious accent in her voice. "What do you think I care about compromising myself?" And she laughed. "If you only knew how compromised I am already, you would see that this visit, if it ever gets out, instead of blackening me, will shine white against my robe of darkness and death."

"What do you mean?" I asked in fear, taking her hands; for she was too sincere to be theatrical.

"Mean!" she repeated in the same strained tone. "I mean that I have come to see you, my lover—so you sign yourself, don't you?—to see you for perhaps the last time—alone at midnight—and you meet me with coldness and tell me I must not compromise myself."

"You don't know what you are saying," I answered; but I interpreted what she said as a challenge and my fevered blood rushed over will and sense. I took her in my arms and drew her to me and covered her face and neck with kisses. A moment afterward she was holding me from her breathless.

"Be reasonable, be reasonable," she said with a smile, and sat down in the low chair.

"Reasonable," I said, throwing myself on my knees before her and putting my arms round her waist. "How do you think I can be reasonable when you tell me that you have come to your lover for perhaps the last time and find him cold. That is not true, Sonia, that is not true. My kisses are still on your neck. Say that it is not true.

"Do you know," I went on, "that I have never seen you before in a low dress? How exquisite you are! Like some strange lily with the white leaves turned back." And I put my lips again on the smooth, veined flesh. A moment, and her cool skin fired my blood, and my heart shook me with its beating. "Cold!" I repeated. "Am I cold?"

She lifted my head from her neck, saying, "No, love," beseechingly.

"But how can you call me 'love,'" I said, "and speak of the 'last time?'" And again I drew her to me.

"'Perhaps the last time,'" she corrected me, flushing and still holding my head from her.

"That's the same thing," I said roughly, with a sort of physical exasperation at her restraint. "What do you mean? If you don't explain it or take it back, I will keep you here always and it will indeed be the last time that you will plague me with absence," and I began to caress the restraining arms with my lips.

"Ah," she cried, "be reasonable, George, be reasonable. If you only knew, the fear that you might think worse of me for coming made it difficult to come."

"How could you?" I interrupted; but she shook her head sadly.

"Ah, yes, I could," she replied. "You showed me that in Vienna when I took you to that private room; I saw it in your face, and it hurt me, hurt me. It is always hurting me."

"Forgive me," I cried, overcome with shame and remorse, "forgive me, Sonia! Really I put it out of my mind; it had no effect on me; I never harbored it. One only learns such a nature as yours little by little; forgive me, sweet!"

Even as I spoke I struggled for self-possession and the power to think, and with this same purpose I added:

"But won't your carriage be waiting? Hadn't I better send it home?"

"No," she said, "I came in a droshky. I will go back in it when you are tired of me."

"Tired of you?" I repeated. "That will never be. But why do you provoke me," I went on wildly, "when I am half mad and unable to think? Your beauty intoxicates me. Don't you know that I have longed for you and dreamed of you for months? Why do you talk of my being 'tired'?"

"Why?" she repeated. "Why? That's hard to tell unless you knew all that I know. But do you think it has cost me nothing to keep away from you all these months? All the time I have lived for others and crushed my own heart. Is that nothing? Now I come and let my heart speak for the moment; is that wonderful?" She clasped her hands and went on as if she had caught the clew.

"Is it wonderful," she repeated, starting up, "that one finds it hard to die before one has lived? Wonderful that one who gives everything should want to keep one moment for the man she loves? Wonderful that one cannot be resolute all through but must be a woman at the last?"

"At the last," I said, as if waking suddenly to something strange and strained in her. "What do you mean?"

"Don't ask me," she replied, still in the same tone of exaltation. "I am mad to-night—or sane, for once—I don't know which or care. One thing's sure; my life is mine now to do as I

please with. At last it is mine—or yours if you will."

Her voice played on my nerves like music.

"Do you remember telling me once," she went on, "that to rouse your passion and not satisfy it was unfair, for it drew out the worst in you? I told you then that I would give you anything—everything, if I were free.

"Now I am free—free as fire or air—and I come to you."

She held out her hands to me, and in my poor brain came the thought, the one thought, that the bond of the flesh would indeed be a bond between us that she could never break, that so she would always return to me and at last be mine. And I took her slowly in my arms and put my lips to hers.

An hour afterward I was seated in the chair and she was in my arms, and I noticed that her face was pale and thin, and the violet rings about her eyes made my heart weep. I tried to comfort her by telling her how I would live in Petersburg always and make myself a Russian and do whatever pleased her, and all these sentences I said in Russian carefully to her; but she put her hand on my mouth with infinite tenderness.

"No plans, dear, no plans, and no regrets. The past does not belong to us any more, and the future may never be ours. It is this moment that we own, and it consoles me for everything to feel your arms about me and to know that you are happy. You are, aren't you?"

"More than happy," I said, "if to-day is the beginning of a new life for us, if you will be my wife and give yourself to me forever."

"Forever," she repeated, in a tone drenched with emotion. "Our 'forever' is but a moment, and yet it repays me for all I have suffered and for all I may suffer still," and she put her hand through my hair in a caress.

What could I say? Her words brought tears of joy to my eyes, and yet made me feel divinely humble. I lifted her from me and slipped down beside her on my knees with my arms still about her—that was my place, I felt—and then I drew down her eyes and kissed them again and again, with my heart now, and not my lips alone.

And so we sat for a long time, speaking, I think, but little, and yet getting to know each other more and more intimately with the mysterious divination of love.

Suddenly there came a sound in the hotel: the night was gone; some one on my floor was being called for an early train, and as soon as she heard the noise Sonia started to her feet:

"I must go!"

"Go!" I said. "But let me go with you; I must see you home."

"No, no!" she cried. "You must not." But I persisted.

"Why not, Sonia?"

She turned to me with her whole face shaken and her eyes brimming over. The sadness in her face was despairing.

"You must not question me, dear one; I have no explanations to give. I only want you to know one thing, to put it in your soul, as it is in mine—that I owe you all the sweetness of my life."

She put her arms about my neck, and in her eyes there was the love that is stronger than death. I took her down to the door of the hotel. As soon as the door opened on the dull gray morning a *droszhky* that had evidently been on the lookout whirled up and in a moment she had gone and I was alone.

The next two or three days passed in a dream with me. I wrote to Sonia in the morning saying that I would have to see her again at once, that I could not live without her, and that I was determined to share her fate, whatever it might be. I added that if

I did not hear from her, I should seek her till I found her. The afternoon of the same day brought me a note. The porter told me that an *isvostchik* had left it and gone away at once. It was from Sonia and just like her; here it is:

DEAR HEART: You must not see me. I do not wish it. You shall hear from me soon.

Yours till death, SONIA.

Two or three days later I came down to lunch rather late. I had been conscious for a little while that there was an unusual hurrying and scurrying about in the hotel, but I was so wrapped up in my own feelings and hopes that I paid little attention to it all. When I got down to the restaurant, I found everything in confusion. Waiters came into the room and went out again quickly, and though, strange to say, there was no one but myself to serve, they did not attend to me. Three several times I gave my order and the waiter took it, went away and never came back. At last I got up, caught a half-scared waiter by the ear, and said to him in Russian:

"What's the matter? Have you all lost your wits?"

"No, sir," he replied, "but the czar is dead, they say."

"What, man?" I cried. "What do you mean?"

It was true. The head waiter came in, and in a moment told me the whole tragedy. The czar had been out driving; on his way back to the Winter Palace bombs had been thrown which had blown his horses and himself to pieces.

"And the throwers?" I asked.

His eyebrows went up. "The police have one," he said, "and they are searching. They say it is the Nihilists."

Half an hour afterward, a note was brought to me from Green, asking me to come to the embassy at once. I went, and found him in a state of consternation; and yet he could not help

saying what every one was saying, "the greatest crime of the century." Green was sure to make his way in diplomacy—his thoughts kept the common road: every one would be pleased with him.

"It is terrible," I said, "but what has it all to do with me?"

"Much," he replied quickly. "Some time ago the police came here to find out about you, to find out if you were favorably known to us. Of course, we told them that you were all right; but they came back a couple of days ago and said"—he began turning over some papers till at last he found a slip on which some memoranda were scribbled—"that you were known to be in communication with Nihilists, notably with a Jewess, one Helfmann, and that you should be warned." He threw down the paper and went on: "The moment I got the news of this tragedy, I sent for you to tell you. I think you had better take this dispatch box and go to Berlin with it at once as one of our messengers."

"Not I," I replied. "I have done nothing wrong."

"Mere suspicion now," he said, "would put you in prison for a year, and we could not help you. Believe me, you must go. I cannot tell you all my reasons, but you must leave Petersburg to-night."

His insistence was so peculiar, so menacing, that I told him at last I would take his advice; and I did.

But first I wrote to Sonia and told her what had befallen me and gave her my address, begging her to write. I left Petersburg that evening, and I left it not a moment too soon. The next day it would have been impossible to leave without a special permit countersigned by the chief of police; and he would never have given it to me.

That was an exciting time in Berlin, and, I suppose, all over the civilized world. Men talked of nothing and read of nothing but the great tragedy, and

every detail that came to hand only increased the public interest. Every one felt that this crime was like no other crime; it was not the deed of one or two monomaniacs; there were dozens implicated in it, and in spite of numberless spies and detectives, a whole government organized for defense, nothing had been suspected, nothing had leaked out. Yet one day we read that, had the czar returned to his palace by another route, the whole street would have gone into the air with him—the whole of Garden Street had been undermined from side to side and turned into a huge magazine. A little later we heard that the assassins were all volunteers—the picked and chosen out of forty-seven who had offered themselves for the work; and a little later still came the news that two days before the assassination three of the murderers had actually rehearsed the crime. They had dared to go through the police-crowded streets of Petersburg to a piece of waste land on the outskirts of the town and there throw one of the five-inch tin bombs in order to study what its effect would be. The imagination was palsied by such facts.

The later conduct of these conspirators was no less extraordinary. One hundred and fifty accused and not a single informer! Not a single person who tried to save his own life at the expense of his fellows! And every one knew enough of the methods of Russian prisoners to know that neither punishment nor reward was spared to win betrayal and make conviction sure. Scenes to shake the soul; on the one side mind torture, planned and perfect; on the other, silence.

"You met so-and-so at such-and-such a place?" questioned the magistrate. "We know it. You were dressed as a workman; he was dressed as an artisan. You see, we know everything. Admit it and you shall go free."

A smile was the answer. The most

astonishing thing was that these criminals would tell of themselves freely; they seemed indeed to court death; but not a word to hurt their fellows.

And so by these individual confessions little by little we came to the heart of the matter and learned that it was a woman, a mere girl, who had been the soul of the conspiracy; the master spirit who drew the others to her and inflamed them with her own white heat of purpose; and bit by bit we were enabled to reconstruct the last scene.

The place was the bridge leading over the Catherine Canal. On the rise of the bridge itself as on a platform whence she could see and be seen, the girl took her stand; below her were her three assistants, Risakoff, Elnikoff, and another. The girl was to wave her pocket handkerchief, as the death signal.

Suddenly the horses and the closed carriage, surrounded by its escort of Cossacks, appeared whirling toward the bridge. The handkerchief fluttered, and at once Risakoff threw his bomb. It smashed the hinder part of the carriage and killed a Cossack and a moujik who happened to be standing near. The hind wheels being blown away, the carriage fell and stopped the horses. A moment after, the czar opened the door and stepped out unhurt. Seeing the Cossack and the moujik lying in their blood on the ground, he was overpowered by the sense of his own escape and cried, "Thank God."

At this moment, Risakoff, who had been seized by some of the bystanders, was heard to say: "It is too soon to thank God yet." The same instant the handkerchief fluttered again, and Elnikoff rushed forward, lifted his hands high above his head, and hurled his bomb down between himself and the emperor. He was blown to pieces; the czar's limbs were shattered. The awful sight turned the third murderer to pity;

he shoved his bomb into his pocket and helped lift the dying monarch into a sledge. Oh, wonderful heart of man that includes in itself all contradictions! In one moment this assassin became a nurse at the risk of his life. Meanwhile the girl, seeing her work was done, walked on over the bridge and disappeared among the crowd—to give herself up three days afterward in the Nevski Prospekt.

As I read all this, the blood ebbed from my heart and left me gasping. The simplicity of the signal, the deadly resolution, filled me with a fear which I did not dare to put into words. I was relieved when I read later that the girl chief was supposed to be the mistress of the peasant Jelaboff, and that her name was Lydia Voinoff.

But a day or two later still we heard that she was not the only woman implicated, that there were two women among the six who were put on their trial for murder before the high court of the senate, and that the second woman was a Jewess, one Hetty Helfmann. With that name a weight of fear came on me, crushing me, and I was afraid to think; yet without conscious thinking my fear took form and went with me everywhere.

I scarcely dared to go out. I was waiting for news—"news," that horrible word—in my room, when the door opened and a man came in without ceremony of any kind.

"What do you want?" I asked in astonishment.

He took off his rough cap as he answered: "You don't remember me!"

It was Michailoff.

"Yes," I said, conscious of hate and anger; "I remember you perfectly." And I did. I could see the bare room and the wisps of smoke blown through it and the crowd of men, and Sonia standing with her back to me—I remembered everything, even to the dirt

the men's boots had brought into the room and left on the bare boards.

But the man had altered. This was not the smiling face and the little mustache with its handsome upward curl. He had shaved mustache and beard: the eyes were different, too; they were without light or steadiness. What was it that made me avoid them? Was the man mad? He seemed to resent either my manner or my scrutiny; but he came forward without speaking and threw himself heavily into a chair.

"I am done," he said. "I have not eaten for days nor slept for a week. Give me food and drink."

The remains of my lunch were on the table. As I went to the bell he stopped me.

"Don't ring," he said. "This will do." And he turned and began to eat, while I poured out wine for him.

When he had finished, he took up a cigarette; then leaned back in the chair and began to smoke.

"Do you know," he began quietly, "I meant to kill you, once. How silly it all seems now, how unreal! I have come from Petersburg to see you; to hear you speak; to find out what it is that made such a woman love you! You are tall and strong and clean; but that's all I can see—and that's not enough."

"Did you come here to tell me that?" I asked him.

"No," he replied quietly; "no, I came here as a messenger to answer whatever you had to ask and to give you a letter."

"Give it to me," I said, holding out my hand; and after a moment of what I took to be hesitation he handed me a letter. It was from Sonia. I opened it and read the first line at a glance:

When you get this, I shall be dead, my lover.

I stood with the letter in my hand and felt my heart stop.

"What does it mean?" My voice startled me, it was so small and thin.

"Mean?" he answered. "It means that you were loved by the greatest woman in the world—you! It means that she adored you—she whom we all worshiped and now she is dead—Sophia Perovskaia."

Then it was true; I was not surprised; I seemed to have known it always; but I could not think.

"Ah, the sacred name!" he went on. "The sacred name!"

"Tell me about her," I interrupted him. "Tell me about it. What did she do?"

"Do," he said, "do? Good God! He did not even know her."

"What did she do?" he cried after a pause. "I will tell you. She was the soul of our movement; she foresaw everything; organized everything; and, at the last, directed everything. Ah, she chose her instruments well."

My whole being woke to hate of him and his theatrical speech.

"And you?" I said. "She chose you as a messenger!" and I laughed.

He dropped into the chair and put his face in his hands.

"No," he said, after a pause; "she sent me out of Petersburg at the critical time, persuading me that my brain and tongue alone could do some work in Moscow that had to be done, and so I escaped the police; but when I came back, and I came back as soon as I heard the news, it was too late to do anything for her or the others. I found she had left a letter for you; no one seemed to know you, so I took it and followed you here. I don't know why now—with some wish, I think, to hurt you. But I have no such wish now. I can think of nothing but her—and you're right, she despised me!"

"Tell me of her," I heard myself saying.

"Have you heard of the end?" he asked.

"No," I said in rage; "how could I have heard?"

"That's true," he said. "I have come straight through." And he began hurriedly, as if he liked to tell of it, and his rhetoric hardly ever left him.

"It was awful and beautiful, too. There were crowds and crowds of people; the ten thousand soldiers were but a thin wall to keep the ocean of people back. There was the black scaffold—two poles and a crossbar and five rings with dangling halters. We waited for hours. The snow and ice on the plain had melted under the hot sun, and been churned to mud by the myriad feet. One shivered and burned in turns.

"Suddenly we saw the two tumbrils, high upon the first Risakoff and Jelaboff, and in the next the other three, Sonia in the middle—the one divine thing in the world, with her smiling pale face and God-illumined eyes!

"All of them in black—black robes, black caps; great placards on their breasts, 'Murderers of the czar!' The good czar," he added bitterly, "the czar who cried 'Thank God,' when he saw his Cossacks and moujiks lying dead and thought he had escaped!

"When they unbound them on the platform I could see her walk about cheering each of them, kissing them, encouraging them, but no one could hear what she said for the noise of the drums. Yet her courage lifted the soul and made the place sacred! Then one after the other they mounted the stool. . . . I see her hanging still! . . . As I came away every one was crying,

the soldiers and the people alike—every one. And now," he added, "I am worse than dead. There is nothing for me to hope for in the world—nothing."

He rose and left the room, and I let him go, for I wanted to be alone with my love and her last words to me. Here is her letter:

When you get this, I shall be dead, my lover. Dead—the word looks strange; and yet all it means is simply rest and sleep, and I am tired, tired and worse than tired.

Ever since I left you, I have been in doubt, wondering always whether it would not be better to leave the work undone and just go back and lie in your arms again and feel your kisses on my face.

It was not only the temptation of your love that tortured me, but fear, too—an awful fear! Do you remember once saying to me that ideas were better than deeds, that deeds had always some of the dirt of the world on them? How true that is! And how terrible! Since I left you I have been in the dirt and I shall never be clean again, though my heart loathes it; but still the thing had to be done and that must be enough for me.

I could not do anything else, dear. I was not made to do anything else; I could not have lived a great life; the slow hours would have broken me. I see that now clearly.

I want to say one thing to you before I go, love; one thing that is sure where everything else breaks and changes.

You always compared society to a pyramid—do you remember?—and said that the base of it must rest in the mud. It isn't true, dear; we will lift the pyramid by putting our own breasts under it. It may crush us, but others will follow the example—that is sure!

You will not increase the weight of the pyramid for us; but lighten it and help to lift it, my lover.

And now, dear—

But I can copy no more; the rest of the letter belongs to me alone, for the loss is mine.



# by Norman Davey

*Author of*



*'Good Hunting  
and  
The Guinea Girl'*

## *The Room of the Thousand Peacocks*

**C**OMMENT c'est drôle, the things that arrive. There is no end to them. Each one is unlike the other. When one is young—very young—one thinks all sorts of things. It is then that one imagines oneself to be very clever: that one makes up rules: that one says, "this is so and therefore that will be so:" that one is quite sure of what is going to happen. When one is young one may be happy—one may be unhappy—but always one is certain and always one is a fool.

Do you ever dream those long dreams all through the night, as it seems when you wake, in which a thousand different things happen to you, without any order or any reason in them? The kind of dream in which you begin by sitting in front of a café at a small table of iron, drinking a *del oso* with a friend, and then, suddenly, the table has grown as big as a dinner table and you are sitting on it, afloat in the middle of the sea. And it is no longer Pierre who is with

you, but *Landru*, and you are in pajamas. But it is not a bit cold on this sea, which is so full of seaweed that the water is thick and brown with it. And all the time *Landru* is explaining to you how it was necessary and quite right to kill all his wives. You know it is *Landru*, although he has no beard and is quite a young man, and you feel very sorry for him and friendly, and when he begins bending down and pulling up the seaweed, which he says is good to eat, you are happy to eat it with him. But while your hands are full of the wet, brown seaweed, and before you can eat any of it, the floating table and the young *Landru* and the sea have vanished, and the seaweed in your hand is no longer seaweed, but pink insertion which madame has given you to sew into the *smoking* of monsieur. You are seated on a chair in the Bois and still in pajamas, but no one notices that; until a gendarme comes up and lifts his cap and says, very politely: "Pardon,

mademoiselle, but the Duc de Vichânes presents his compliments to you and would be glad of the return of his pajamas." And then you are in a taxi and the due is really a little dog on the scat opposite.

Life is very much a dream of this kind. There is no sort of connection between this thing and the next thing. You never know what will happen or why this has happened. There are no rules.

When one is young one asks: "Why?" One thinks there is a reason, a system in this life dream. One is not content simply to watch and to be amused. For many years now I have watched things happen. It is like sitting in the *fauteuils* of a great theater. A theater with a stage that may be large or small and with many actors or with few; with an ever-changing *décor*; with an unending series of unconnected scenes. At first one tries to guess what will happen in the next scene. Afterward, one simply watches.

That is the *métier*—the particular *métier*—of a lady's maid. She is inside, and yet not a part of, so many houses. She is, as it were, on the stage and in the stalls at one and the same time. She is the privileged spectator: she is the dresser; she sees the artists without make-up.

There is nothing that is hid from her, and yet— When I was young, very young—*ma foi*, I am not old now! —I thought I knew. I was proud of knowing so much. All the makeshifts—all the lies and excuses of the *bourgeoisie*. How mean are the rich; how wretched, the poor; how stupid, the virtuous; how cruel, the stupid; how mischievous, the clever. In this *métier* one is always the spy in the house; one sees everything; hears everything—and says nothing. In those days I had pride in myself; pride in knowing so much. I knew my way about; I was not to be deceived. I understood men and women

in the world. I knew what women wanted: what men wanted; and how they tried to get what they each desired. I knew my life; on me, as you say, there were no flies. I looked around me, at home, in the cafés, on the streets, and I said every day to myself, "I know everything."

Ah! in those days I was young; I was stupid. Now I know better; and I say to-day, one knows nothing. *Vraiment!* Of life, absolutely nothing.

Of those days—two—five—ten years ago? It seems so long—I will tell you this story. Then: when I thought I was free from flies, and they were yet thick on me. You know Paris? Yes? Then do you know Picât—*la maison Picât*? No? Well, there are many who live in Paris and yet have never heard of Picât. Picât is a restaurant of a very special kind. It is the first of its kind; but it is not its cuisine which makes it famous; no, nor yet its cellar. You will eat a better *filet de sole* at Marigny's, oysters at Prunier's, *soufflé* at Foyot's, and at Paillard or Larue or the *Café de Paris* you can drink whatever wine you care to pay for. Picât has only champagne on his list.

But Picât keeps his clientèle by other means. He has the finest private rooms in Paris: that is the specialty of his house.

In those days I was *femme de chambre* at the Villepiques'. They had a flat in the Avenue d'Eylau.

They were a young couple, and had been married about four years when I came to town. They seemed still very fond of each other—but they had no children—and, one never knows. Monsieur was some years older than madame, he being thirty and she only twenty-four. The flat was large and very well furnished, for although monsieur made but little out of his books, he was also a man of independent means, and madame's father had been Emil Stolze, a big man on the Bourse

and a millionaire. Did I say that Villepique was a man of letters? He was André Villepique, author of "*Entretenué*" and "*Vierge malgré elle*." You have heard of him? No? He was not well known. His books, bound in blue leather, were in the library; but I could never read them; they bored me. When one can see so much around one every day it is a folly to read books about it.

I had not been in the house many days before I learned that madame's relations thought she had thrown herself away upon André Villepique. That is not surprising; I thought so myself. I did not like monsieur: a tall lamp-post of a man, with big eyes and a great idea of how clever he was. He used to look through me as if I were made of glass. I might have been furniture for all the notice he took of me. Although he was Parisian, an Englishman—beg monsieur's pardon—could not have been more *gauche*. And madame was not only rich, but she was very lovely. It was always a delight to me to dress her; she paid for the trouble you took, and she had the most lovely hair imaginable. It was very long and thick and silken, and the time which she spent on it with the brush, and the care in dressing it afterward, was not wasted. The hair of some mistresses I have been with! Good enough in shaded lamplight, perhaps, after an hour spent upon it; but, *mon dieu*, in bright light before the mirror! Short, so that it has to be wound over the pad; stiff like wire; coming away with the comb; black at the roots, where the peroxide has not got at it. Madame's hair was not of that sort, but natural gold. And what a figure! And a skin like velvet. And her face, with her two large blue eyes, so that the men turned round to look at her in the street. Ah, madame could have had her pick. But she must go and marry Villepique! Bah!

She loved monsieur as far as I could

see. For six months I was in the house and never a sign of a lover; though, to be sure, that was not the fault of the men. Monsieur le Comte d'Esnault-Lébine alone gave me a hundred francs a week to do what I could. When madame's relations came once a fortnight to dinner and quarreled with monsieur, madame always took his part. But one never knows.

I have told you about *la maison Picât*. It is not that I have been to such a place—no, but Auguste is a waiter at Picât's and he was a great friend of mine. He is a good fellow, and he adores me—madly. He showed me all the rooms at Picât: that is how I know all about it. They are very beautiful; there are no others like them in Paris, for each salon is decorated in a different way—to suit each kind of taste.

There is the springtime salon, in which the walls are painted to look like green trees and the carpet is green like grass and sprinkled with little white flowers; and the divan is piled high with green and yellow cushions, like the *glaïeuls* in the sedge by the river side. It is the room of the spring, and the ceiling is of the palest blue as if it were the sky, and the salon is lighted by an army of tiny electric lamps hidden behind the four walls under the ceiling; for a narrow space, only a centimeter wide, is left around the walls at the top, so that the light from all these lamps is reflected onto the blue ceiling, and it is as if one was dining in the open air. The small square table in the middle of the room is of plain deal wood, painted white, with a shallow green china bowl in the center, streaked with brown; and upon the water in the bowl floats a great white water lily, asleep above its green leaves. If it is cold weather, the room is warmed with a log upon the brick hearth, under a black *marmite*, and always the air is heavy with the scent of the lily of the valley. If, by any chance,

mademoiselle is very young—particularly if she has red hair—it is here where one dines. It is all arranged in the same manner.

Then there is the white room, which is all white, with a carpet in black and white squares, like a chessboard, and a round table of alabaster. And the black room, in which everything is black, except the golden table, and the cushions in cloth of gold, and the lamp, a great globe of mother-of-pearl, which hangs from the middle of the black ceiling. And there is a red room.

But the most beautiful of all, and the one for which Picât is most famous, is the room of the thousand peacocks.

Here are painted on the walls a thousand peacocks. It is said that Picât engaged a Japanese artist to do the work—one of the greatest painters in the world. The ceiling is of gold, with here and there great peacock's eyes of purple and crimson and blue and green, staring down upon you. The carpet is of gold and purple, and the great divan which fills one end of the room is covered with blue silk, like the sea of the *Côte d'Azur*, and the big cushions are sewn all over with real peacock's feathers. Four balls of crystal, covered with the wings of butterflies, hang from the ceiling by chains of gold, and fill the room with the softest light, staining with a dozen different colors the glass, set upon the table of lapis lazuli. Oh, it is ravishing—the room of the thousand peacocks. And it is Auguste who is waiter in it.

He is a good fellow, is Auguste, as I have told you, and he is very proud of the room of the peacocks—his room; that is natural. He is pleased when a client, too, takes an interest in the *décor*—who is an artist.

It was my afternoon out, and I was sitting with Auguste outside the *Café Morins*. I had been with Madame Villepique about six months. Auguste sipped at his *Vermout cassis* and talked.

I didn't pay much attention to what he was saying. There is always so much to see in the street—the little comedies of the street; the frocks; the hats—and men always talk a lot about nothing—one does not listen. But suddenly I heard a name.

"Villepique."

"Comment? Villepique?"

"But, yes! As I was saying, a Monsieur Villepique—very particular. He must see all the rooms. But he would have nothing but the peacock; he has taste, this Villepique, I admit; and if mademoiselle is a blonde, nothing could be more suitable. There are those who prefer the black room, but they are barbarians, these. There is only the room of the peacocks for your true blonde. Mademoiselle Yvonne herself—"

"But this Villepique?"

"Very particular, I tell you. He has reserved the room for the fifteenth: that is Saturday. He must have this and he must have that. The cushions must be changed. He is sending a great rug of black fur and a special perfume, and he will not drink the *Piper*, but the *patron* must get some *Yquem* from Gaufray. But yet I like a client who—"

"Why, it is *chez* Villepique where I am."

"Comment?"

"He is tall and dark, with a mustache—"

"Exactly!"

"My friend, we should touch some money out of this."

"And how? If monsieur wishes—*le patron* is—"

"Be still! Let me think."

I walked back to the house as if I was in a dream. I saw nothing in the streets. I was thinking out a plan. Life is dear and one must live somehow; and if one can make a little money—honestly—one should not let the chance slip away; for I am a good girl.

That evening I heard monsieur say

to madame: "On Saturday I am dining with Monsieur le député Duprez. We have a lot of business to talk about, so I shall not be home until late. So don't wait up for me." And madame said that in that case she would spend the evening at her mother's. To make it thus easy for that good-for-nothing, her husband! I could have shaken her, the little innocent. But I smiled to myself all the same, for I saw clearly that this would make it easier, also, for me; and I had a plan. It was not yet complete, but I thought I saw my way to gain a little money—and to punish the husband, the wretch! But I was young in those days, and I thought I knew everything.

Thursday was my evening out, but madame said that as both she and monsieur would be out on Saturday evening, would I mind changing my day to Saturday? But, certainly, I would not mind doing that; it fitted in admirably with my plan. "Could I go a little earlier on Saturday, in that case?" I asked madame. "Say at three o'clock?" It was not really necessary, this; but, as I was amiable enough to change my day for madame's convenience, it was only just that I should gain something out of it, too. One should always live up to one's principles. Also, it would afford me an opportunity to see Auguste during the afternoon and arrange details.

I had thought over this affair for nearly a week. I was quite sure now in my mind how to manage it. But it had not been easy. First, I had thought of going to monsieur and threatening to tell everything I knew unless he gave me money. I did not like Villepique, but I did not consider him altogether a fool. If I threatened to expose him, before the date of the rendezvous, he could always alter it; and what evidence had I of any value—for the word of a *femme de chambre* is worth nothing. On the other hand, if I waited until

after the rendezvous, I still had no evidence but my word for it; Auguste and Picât would, of course, swear that monsieur was never there; they are discreet; it is their business to be that. It was clearly useless to go to madame. If she disbelieved me, I would lose my place; if she believed me, I was hardly like to be better off. No; I would go to madame's brother. Joseph Stolze lived in a large flat in the *rue de Courcelles*. He was not married. It is always better in the affair of this sort to deal with a man alone.

I knew my Joseph Stolze; he, above all the family, had been against his sister marrying André Villepique. Joseph could hardly speak civilly to André when he met him in the street. If any one would be happy to pay me for my knowledge it was Joseph Stolze.

It is very convenient, the telephone. On Saturday I rang up Monsieur Joseph Stolze. I made it clear to him that it was a matter of importance to him to be at home at nine o'clock, when I would call upon him; but I did not say who I was. Then I rang up Auguste to tell him to meet me at the *Café Morins* at four o'clock.

I had more trouble with Auguste than I expected. His honor was involved in the affair; clients had always trusted to his discretion; there was Monsieur Picât, and so on. But I persuaded him at last. I explained how he ran no risk in the affair himself. He only had to leave the door of the peacock room unlocked—and not to be there when we went in. I also showed him there was money; he could expect at least ten louis; and then, as I have said, he was crazy about me.

Monsieur Joseph received me in the dining room. He was surprised to see that it was only me; but I went to the point at once.

"Monsieur Villepique," I said, "is, at this moment, dining in a private room with a woman, while madame believes

him to be with Monsieur le député Duprez."

"Is this true?"

"I am not a liar. We can go there and prove it."

"Where?"

"Monsieur will understand that I have been very faithful to madame in this matter. It has not been an easy affair. I am not mercenary myself. But there is Auguste, the waiter. I had to promise him five hundred francs."

"They are there now?"

"Oui, monsieur."

"Eh bien, and how much do you want for yourself?"

"I leave that to monsieur's generosity," I said modestly.

"A thousand francs?"

"Fifteen hundred francs, altogether." Monsieur Joseph made a face.

"You are quite sure of your facts?"

"Monsieur need not pay me until he has seen the facts for himself."

"Good! Where is it?"

"Chez Picat."

"Let us go!"

The entrance to the private rooms at Picat is not through the restaurant downstairs. There are two private entrances—one in the rue Lépic and the other in the Boulevard, so that monsieur and madame may, if need be, leave by different doors. We entered by the rue Lépic; Auguste met us at the top of the stairs; he vanished through a side door after a few whispered words with me. Monsieur Joseph followed me down the corridor.

"This is the room," I said in a low voice to monsieur; "it is not locked. Shall I knock?"

"*Ma foi, non!*" muttered Joseph Stolze. "We will give our dear André a little surprise."

He turned the handle softly and opened the door suddenly. I followed closely behind him, and in a moment we were in the peacock room.

The first thing I saw from behind

monsieur's back was the table. It was littered with fruit dishes and coffee cups and liqueur glasses; a cigarette-end smoldered in a silver ash tray; the dregs of coffee lay in the cups; one glass was still half full of *finé*; the skin and stones of peaches lay in the plates. The two chairs had been pushed back from the table and they were empty. So much I saw, when Joseph Stolze stepped forward with a stifled cry and I saw the other part of the room.

There was no sign of André Villepique, but from among the pile of cushions on the divan had sprung up a slender figure. She looked more than ever lovely as she stood there framed against the dark, rich colors of the divan. Her long, fair hair hung loose over her shoulders. Although I had dressed her every day for many months, I had never seen Madame Villepique look more beautiful as she stood there before us. But I was too amazed to enjoy, at that moment, her beauty; I could only stare at her, speechless with surprise.

"Marcelle, what are you doing here?" cried Joseph Stolze, in a terrible voice. And then he swung round on me. "You have lied to me!"

I could only babble: "But it was monsieur who arranged this; it was monsieur whom Auguste saw."

"You saw him?"

"No; but he gave the name, and Auguste—"

And then I saw it all in one flash. Madame's lover had given the name of her husband to make it more safe—in case of any indiscretion—any scandal. How many men are tall and dark and carry the mustache? Oh, I had been a fool! And where was my fifteen hundred francs now? I had done for myself. I could have cried—there, in front of madame and Monsieur Joseph.

"What—why, why are you— Joseph, I have been dining with André," stammered madame.

"I see," sneered monsieur. "Charming, to be sure. Who is your lover? Where is he?"

"You are a fool!" cried madame, stamping with her foot on the carpet. "I tell you it is André."

Joseph Stolze began to laugh; it was not a pleasant laugh. It was the kind of laugh for which people have died before they had time to finish it. It was a laugh than ran up his face in successive spasms from his double chin to his bald head, with the fine black hair streaks across it; a laugh that arched his eyebrows—that made to bristle the upturned points of his mustache—a laugh in which his hands and his shoulders took part. It was a devil of a laugh; it was to have been a long laugh. But he never finished that laugh. For halfway through it, the purple curtains at the far end of the room opened and through them came André Villepique. He held a scent spray in one hand and a hairbrush in the other. He stared stupidly at the scene before him. *Mon Dieu*, but it must have seemed strange enough to him. Madame, her face flushed in anger; Stolze, with his unfinished laugh frozen into a smile, as it were, halfway up his face; myself, with open mouth, gaping at him.

"André!" gasped Monsieur Joseph, at last, in a dry cackle of a voice:

"I told you it was André. You always were a fool, Joseph."

"But why—what—why—" gabbled Stolze.

"What are you doing here? You fool! Go away! Go away!"

"Why? Why?" repeated Monsieur Joseph. "I do not understand, I—"

"If my husband wishes to ask me out to dinner—" began madame.

But André Villepique broke in.

"It is a simple matter. What kills marriage is that there is no romance, no secrecy—nothing to hide. If I care to make a rendezvous with my wife, as though she were not my wife, and dine in private— Bah! Cannot you see the psychology? The romance? At home it is the rule, like—like—breakfast."

Joseph Stolze threw himself down on the divan and shook with laughter, while monsieur and madame glared at him. At last he pulled himself together.

"Allons, ma p'tite," he cried, jumping up. "We will leave the lovers together!"

But I did not laugh, and outside the door—

"There is yet," I said, "the five hundred francs for Auguste."

"I do not give something for nothing," said Joseph Stolze.

Ah! In those days I was young.

I thought I knew everything. I should have insisted on having the money first.

To-day, I would know better.

To-day, I say to myself every morning and every evening: "P'tite, you are an innocent; you are a novice; you know nothing!"

A WOMAN who loves has no pity except for her love; all her feeling of charity, kindness, good nature and pity and devotion are concentrated in one individual and one only.—*Alphonse Daudet*.

THE tongue is woman's weapon, even as the fist is man's. And it is a far deadlier weapon. Words break no bones—they break hearts instead. Yet were men one tenth part so ready with their fists, as women are with their barbed and envenomed tongues, what savage brutes you would think us—wouldn't you?—and what a rushing trade the police courts would drive, to be sure.—*Henry Harland*.

# Her Majesty, The Moon

Queen and huntress, chaste and fair,  
Now the sun is laid to sleep,  
Seated in thy silver car,  
State in wonted manner keep.  
Hesperus entreats thy light,  
Goddess, excellently bright!—*Ben Jonson.*

AND God made two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night.—*Genesis.*



## The Inconstant Moon

*Romeo:* Lady, by yonder blessed moon I swear  
That tips with silver all these fruit-tree tops—

*Juliet:* Oh, swear not by the moon, the inconstant moon,  
That monthly changes in her circled orb,  
Lest that thy love prove likewise variable.—*William Shakespeare.*



## Mistress of the Sun

BEHOLD his flame, that placid dame,  
The moon's celestial highness!  
There's not a trace upon her face  
Of diffidence or shyness.  
She borrows light, that through the night  
Mankind may all acclaim her.  
But truth to tell, she lights up well.  
So I, for one, don't blame her.  
Oh, pray make no mistake,  
We are not shy.  
We're very wide awake,  
The moon and I!—*W. S. Gilbert.*



## The Eastern Empress

THE night was clear and calm. The risen moon outlined with huge angles of light and shadow the architectural masses of Cleopatra's palace, which stood out in strong relief against a background of bluish transparency; and the waters of the Nile, wherein her reflection lengthened into a shining column, were frosted with silvery ripples. It was one of those enchanted nights of the Orient, which are more splendid than our fairest days; for our sun can ill compare with that Oriental moon.—*Théophile Gautier.*

## Goddess of Lovers

WHAT is there in thee, Moon, that thou shouldst move  
 My heart so potently? When yet a child  
 I oft have dried my tears when thou hast smiled.  
 And as I grew in years, still didst thou blend  
 With all mine ardors.  
 Thou wast the charm of women, lovely Moon.  
 Oh, what a wild and harmonized tune!  
 My spirit struck from all the beautiful!  
 On some bright essence could it lean, and lull  
 Myself to immortality.—*John Keats.*



## The Crescent

“WHY is it, my reverend benefactor,” asked the youngest Bukoyemski, “the Turks cherish some kind of worship for the moon, and bear it on their standards?”  
 “But have not dogs some devotion toward the moon also?” asked the priest.  
 “Of course, but why should the Turks have it?”  
 “Just because they are dog-brothers.”  
 “Well, as God is dear to me, that explains all,” said the young man, looking at the moon then in wonderment.

“But the moon is not to blame,” said the host; “and it is delightful to gaze at it when in the calm of the night it paints all the trees with its beams, as if some one had coated them with silver. I love greatly to sit by myself on such a night, gaze at the sky, and marvel at the Lord God’s almighty ness.”

“Yes,” said Father Voynovski; “God in his mercy created the moon as well as the sun. If there were no moon, people would break their necks at night if they traveled; not to mention this, that in perfect darkness devilish wickedness would be greater by far than it is at present.”—*Henryk Sienkiewicz.*



## Moonshine

THE devil’s in the moon for mischief; they  
 Who called her chaste, methinks, began too soon  
 Their nomenclature: there is not a day—  
 The longest—not the twenty-first of June—  
 Sees half the business in a wicked way,  
 On which three single hours of moonshine smile—  
 And then she looks so modest all the while.—*Lord Byron.*



## The Moon’s Face Is Scratched

ACCORDING to the Hottentots, the Moon once sent the Hare to inform men that, as she died and rose again, so should men die and again come to life. But the stupid Hare forgot the purport of the message, and, coming down to the earth, proclaimed it far and wide that, though the moon was invariably resuscitated whenever she died, mankind, on the other hand, should die and go to the devil. When the silly brute returned to the lunar country and told what he had done,

the Moon was so angry that she took up an ax and aimed a blow at his head to split it. But the ax missed and only cut his lip open; and that was the origin of the "hare lip." Maddened by the pain, the Hare flew at the Moon and almost scratched her eyes out; and to this day she bears on her face the mark of the Hare's claws.—*John Fiske.*



### Lover's Moon

OH, Moon of my Delight, who knowst no wane,  
The Moon of Heaven is rising once again:  
How oft hereafter, rising, shall she look  
Through this same garden after me—in vain.—*Omar Khayyam.*



### The Seductive Planet, the Moon

SINCE the night is destined for sleep, unconsciousness, repose, forgetfulness, why make it more charming than the day, softer than dawn or evening? And why does this seductive planet, the moon, more poetic than the sun, that seems destined, so discreet it is, to illuminate things too delicate and mysterious for the light of day, make the darkness so transparent?

Why this half veil of moonlight cast over the world? Why these tremblings of the heart, this emotion of the spirit, this enervation of the body? Why this display of enchantments that human beings do not see, since they are lying in their beds? For whom is destined this sublime spectacle, this abundance of poetry cast from heaven to earth?

And the abbé could not understand. But see, out there on the edge of the meadow bathed in the shining mist, two figures are walking side by side. The two seem but a single being, for whom was destined this silent night. They came toward the priest, a living answer to his questionings.

He said to himself: "Perhaps God has made such moonlight nights as this to idealize the loves of men."—*Guy de Maupassant.*



### The Creole Moon

THE moon is beaming upon the 'simmon tree;  
The stars are gleaming, oh, come along with me.  
Oh, come with me, Clotilda, come with me!  
We'll dance and sing beneath the 'simmon tree.  
The darkies are singing; oh, hear the tambourine.  
Bells are ringing. Oh, come my dusky queen.  
Now the merry banjos are in tune  
We'll dance by the light of the moon.—*Creole Love Song.*



### The Miracle of the Moon

HABIB, the wise, wishing to test Mahomet, bade him, if he was a true prophet, cleave the moon in two. Mahomet lifted his hands toward Heaven and cried on the moon to fulfill Habib's desire. No sooner did the moon hear Mahomet's voice than it came down out of the sky to the top of the Kaaba, making seven

circuits. Then, to the awe and wonder of those who beheld this thing, it came to Mahomet and entered the right sleeve of his robe, coming out of the left sleeve. Then it went into the collar, descended to the skirt, and divided itself into two half disks. These half disks later appeared in the sky, one in the east and one in the west, until they came together and were united again.—*Arabian Legend.*



### The Moon a Catchall

SOME thought it mounted to the lunar sphere,  
Since all things lost on earth are treasured there.  
There heroes' wits are kept in pond'rous vases,  
And beaux' in snuff boxes and tweezer cases,  
There broken vows and death-bed alms are found,  
And lovers' hearts with ends of ribbon bound,  
And courtiers' promises and sick men's prayers,  
The smiles of harlots and the tears of heirs,  
Cages for gnats and chains to yoke a flea,  
Dried butterflies and tomes of casuistry.—*Alexander Pope.*



### Moon Madness

THE various mental derangements, which have been attributed to the influence of the moon—Luna—have given to this day the name lunatics to persons suffering from serious mental disorders.—*John Beattie Crosier.*

"UP, Tristam, up," men cry, "thou moonstruck knight!  
What foul fiend rides thee?"—*Matthew Arnold.*



### The Breadfruit

IN the Samoan Islands the dark patches on the moon are supposed to be portions of a woman's figure. A certain woman was once hammering something with a mallet, when the moon arose, looking so much like a breadfruit that the woman asked it to come down and let her child eat a piece of it; but the moon, enraged at the insult, gobbled up woman, mallet and child, and there, in the moon's belly, you may still behold them.—*John Fiske.*



### The Moon-rakers

THE people of Wiltshire gained their nickname of the "Moon-rakers" in a curious manner. They were, so the story runs, great smugglers. One night, surprised by the coast guard on the watch, they sunk some smuggled whisky in a shallow arm of the sea. Biding their time, they waited until the coast was clear, and then, armed with long rakes, they went back to retrieve their cache. But meanwhile the moon had risen and was flooding the inlet with a silver and betraying light. Some vigilant eye among the guardians of the law noted the mysterious activities, and the guard sprang again into pursuit. This time they came upon the smugglers in full action, and demanded an explanation.

"Well——" One lanky longshoreman scratched his head and looked hopefully about for an inspiration. To his very feet the white flood of the moonlight ran, curdled by the heave of the sea. The man in the moon appeared to wink jovially. "Well," he said, "we were just raking out that cream cheese yonder."



### At the Wedding of the Owl and the Pussy Cat

THEY dined on mince and slices of quince,  
Which they ate with a runcible spoon,  
And hand in hand on the edge of the strand,  
They danced by the light of the moon.—*Edward Lear.*



He wants to take the moon between his teeth.—*Old French Proverb.*



### Green Cheese

You may as soon persuade some country peasant that the moon is made of green cheese—as we say—as that 'tis bigger than his cart wheel.—*John Wilkins.*

He thought the moon was made of green cheese!—*Rabelais.*



### The Journey From the Moon

*Cyrano:* I have dropped from the moon like a bomb. I arrived—pray pardon my appearance—by the last whirlwind. I am rather unpresentable—travel, you know! My eyes are still full of star dust. My spurs are clogged with bristles off a planet. See, on my sleeve, a comet's hair. Embedded in my calf I have brought back one of the Great Bear's teeth, and as, falling too near the Trident, I strained aside to clear one of its prongs, I landed sitting in Libra—yes, one of the scales—and now my weight is registered up there. And if, monsieur, you should take my nose between your fingers and compress it—milk would result.

*De Guiche:* Milk?

*Cyrano:* Of the Milky Way. Will you believe it—I discovered it in passing—that Sirius at night puts on a nightcap? The Lesser Bear is too little yet to bite. I tumbled plump through Lyra and snapped a string! But I intend setting all this down in a book, and the golden stars I have brought back in my shaggy mantle, when the book is printed, will be seen serving as asterisks.—*Edmond Rostand.*



### Miscalling the Moon

To the ancients, the moon was not a lifeless ball: it was the horned huntress, Artemis, coursing through the upper ether, or bathing herself in the clear lake, or Aphrodite, protectress of lovers. For calling the moon a mass of dead matter, Anaxagoras came near losing his life.—*John Fiske.*

## The Man in the Moon

EVERY one knows that the moon is inhabited by a man with a bundle of sticks on his back, who has been exiled thither for many centuries, and who is so far off that he is beyond the reach of death. He has once visited this earth, if the nursery rhyme is to be credited when it asserts that:

The Man in the Moon  
Came down too soon,  
And asked his way to Norwich:

but whether he ever reached that city the same authority does not state.—*Sabine Baring-Gould*.

THIS man with lantern, dog, and bush of thorns, presenteth moonshine.—*Midsummer Night's Dream*.

This is a reference to the legend, which, some authorities maintain, holds that the man in the moon is the man mentioned in the following story found in the Old Testament:

AND while the children of Israel were in the wilderness they found a man that gathered sticks upon the Sabbath day.

And they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation.

And they put him in ward because it was not declared what should be done to him.

And the Lord said unto Moses: The man shall surely be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp.

And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died. As the Lord commanded Moses.—*Numbers XV.*, 32-36.

Others maintain that the man in the moon is Cain, with his dog and thorn, the thorns representing the thorns and briers of the fall, and the dog impersonating the "foul Fiend." Some say the man is the shepherd Endymion, taken to the moon by Diana. And there are those who will tell you that the man is not a man at all, but a lady—

That orbed maiden, with white fire laden,  
Whom mortals call the moon.—*Percy Bysshe Shelley*.



## The Sailor's Weather Vane

THEN up and spake an old sailor,  
Had sailed the Spanish Main,  
"I pray thee put into yonder port,  
For I fear a hurricane.  
Last night the moon had a golden ring,  
To-night no moon we see."—*Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*.



## The Pious Hare

IN Ceylon it is said that as Sakyamuni was one day wandering half starved in the forest, a pious hare met him and offered himself to be slain and cooked for dinner; whereupon the holy Buddha set it on high in the moon, that future generations of men should see it and marvel at its piety.—*John Fiske*.

by  
Sir James M. Barrie

Author of

"Peter Pan"



# *The Inconsiderate Waiter*

FORQUENTLY I have to ask myself in the street for the name of the man I bowed to just now, and then, before I can answer, the wind of the first corner blows him from my memory. I have a theory, however, that those puzzling faces, which pass before I can see who cut the coat, all belong to club waiters.

Until William forced his affairs upon me that was all I did know of the private life of waiters, though I have been in the club for twenty years. I was even unaware whether they slept downstairs or had their own homes; nor had I the interest to inquire of other members, nor they the knowledge to inform me. I hold that this sort of people should be fed and clothed and given airing and wives and children, and I subscribe yearly, I believe, for these purposes; but to come into closer relation with waiters is bad form; they are club fittings, and William should have kept his distress to himself, or taken it away and patched it up like a rent in one of the chairs. His incon-

siderateness has been a pair of spectacles to me for months.

It is not correct taste to know the name of a club waiter, so that I must apologize for knowing William's, and still more for not forgetting it. If, again, to speak of a waiter is bad form, to speak bitterly is the comic degree of it. But William has disappointed me sorely. There were years when I would defer dining several minutes that he might wait on me. His pains to reserve the window seat for me were perfectly satisfactory. I allowed him privileges, as to suggest dishes, and would give him information, as that some one had startled me in the reading room by slamming a door. I have shown him how I cut my finger with a piece of string. Obviously he was gratified by these attentions, usually recommending a liqueur; and I fancy he must have understood my sufferings, for he often looked ill himself. Probably he was rheumatic, but I cannot say for certain as I never thought of asking, and he had the sense to see that

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the knowledge would be offensive to me.

In the smoking room we have a waiter so independent that once, when he brought me a yellow chartreuse, and I said I had ordered green, he replied, "No, sir; you said yellow." William could never have been guilty of such effrontery. In appearance, of course, he is mean, but I can no more describe him than a milkmaid could draw cows. I suppose we distinguish one waiter from another much as we pick our hat from the rack. We could have plotted a murder safely before William. He never presumed to have opinions of his own. When such was my mood he remained silent, and if I announced that something diverting had happened to me, he laughed before I told him what it was. He turned the twinkle in his eye off or on at my bidding as readily as if it was the gas. To my "Sure to be wet to-morrow," he would reply, "Yes, sir;" and to Trelawney's "It doesn't look like rain," two minutes afterward, he would reply, "No, sir." It was one member who said Lightning Rod would win the Derby and another who said Lightning Rod had no chance, but it was William who agreed with both. He was like a cheroot, which may be smoked from either end. So used was I to him that, had he died or got another situation—or whatever it is such persons do when they disappear from the club—I should probably have told the head waiter to bring him back, as I disliked changes.

It would not become me to know precisely when I began to think William an ingrate, but I date his lapse from the evening when he brought me oysters. I detest oysters, and no one knew it better than William. He has agreed with me that he could not understand any gentleman's liking them. Between me and a certain member who smacks his lips twelve times to a dozen of them, William knew I liked a screen to be

placed until we had reached the soup, and yet he gave me the oysters and the other man my sardine. Both the other member and I called quickly for brandy and the head waiter. To do William justice, he shook, but never can I forget his audacious explanation: "Beg pardon, sir, but I was thinking of something else."

In these words William had flung off the mask, and now I knew him for what he was.

I must not be accused of bad form for looking at William on the following evening. What prompted me to do so was not personal interest in him, but a desire to see whether I dare let him wait on me again. So, recalling that a caster was off a chair yesterday, one is entitled to make sure that it is on to-day before sitting down. If the expression is not too strong, I may say that I was taken aback by William's manner. Even when crossing the room to take my orders he let his one hand play nervously with the other. I had to repeat "Sardine on toast" twice, and instead of answering "Yes, sir," as if my selection of sardine on toast was a personal gratification to him, which is the manner one expects of a waiter, he glanced at the clock, then out at the window, and, starting, asked, "Did you say sardine on toast, sir?"

It was the height of summer, when London smells like a chemist's shop, and he who has the dinner table at the window needs no candles to show him his knife and fork. I lay back at intervals, now watching a starved-looking woman asleep on a doorstep, and again complaining of the club bananas. By and by I saw a little girl of the commonest kind, ill-clad and dirty, as all these Arabs are. Their parents should be compelled to feed and clothe them comfortably, or at least to keep them indoors, where they cannot offend our eyes. Such children are for pushing aside with one's umbrella; but this girl

I noticed because she was gazing at the club windows. She had stood thus for perhaps ten minutes when I became aware that some one was leaning over me to look out at the window. I turned round. Conceive my indignation on seeing that the rude person was William!

"How dare you, William?" I said sternly. He seemed not to hear me. Let me tell, in the measured words of one describing a past incident, what then took place. To get nearer the window he pressed heavily on my shoulder.

"William, you forget yourself!" I said, meaning—as I see now—that he had forgotten me.

I heard him gulp, but not to my reprimand. He was scanning the street. His hands chattered on my shoulder, and, pushing him from me, I saw that his mouth was agape.

"What are you looking for?" I asked.

He stared at me, and then, like one who had at last heard the echo of my question, seemed to be brought back to the club. He turned his face from me for an instant, and answered shakily:

"I beg your pardon, sir! I—I shouldn't have done it. Are the bananas too ripe, sir?"

He recommended the nuts, and awaited my verdict so anxiously while I ate one that I was about to speak graciously, when I again saw his eyes drag him to the window.

"William," I said, my patience giving way at last, "I dislike being waited on by a melancholy waiter."

"Yes, sir," he replied, trying to smile; and then broke out passionately: "For God's sake, sir, tell me, have you seen a little girl looking in at the club windows?"

He had been a good waiter once, and his distracted visage was spoiling my dinner.

"There," I said, pointing to the girl, and no doubt would have added that

he must bring me coffee immediately, had he continued to listen. But already he was beckoning to the child. I had not the least interest in her—indeed, it had never struck me that waiters had private affairs, and I still think it a pity that they should have; but as I happened to be looking out at the window I could not avoid seeing what occurred. As soon as the girl saw William she ran into the middle of the street, regardless of vehicles, and nodded three times to him. Then she disappeared.

I have said that she was quite a common child, without attraction of any sort, and yet it was amazing the difference she made in William. He gasped relief, like one who has broken through the anxiety that checks breathing, and into his face there came a silly laugh of happiness. I had dined well, on the whole, so I said:

"I am glad to see you cheerful again, William."

I meant that I approved his cheerfulness because it helped my digestion, but he must needs think I was sympathizing with him.

"Thank you, sir," he answered. "Oh, sir! when she nodded and I saw it was all right I could have gone down on my knees to God."

I was as much horrified as if he had dropped a plate on my toes. Even William, disgracefully emotional as he was at the moment, flung out his arms to recall the shameful words.

"Coffee, William!" I said sharply.

I sipped my coffee indignantly, for it was plain to me that William had something on his mind.

"You are not vexed with me, sir?" he had the hardihood to whisper.

"It was a liberty," I said.

"I know, sir; but I was beside myself."

"That was a liberty, also."

He hesitated, and then blurted out:

"It is my wife, sir. She——"

I stopped him with my hand. Wil-

ham, whom I had favored in so many ways, was a married man! I might have guessed as much years before, had I ever reflected about waiters, for I knew vaguely that his class did this sort of thing. His confession was distasteful to me, and I said warningly:

"Remember where you are, William."

"Yes, sir; but you see, she is so delicate—"

"Delicate! I forbid your speaking to me on unpleasant topics."

"Yes, sir; begging your pardon."

It was characteristic of William to beg my pardon and withdraw his wife, like some unsuccessful dish, as if its taste would not remain in the mouth. I shall be chided for questioning him further about his wife, but, though doubtless an unusual step, it was only bad form superficially, for my motive was irreproachable. I inquired for his wife, not because I was interested in her welfare, but in the hope of allaying my irritation. So I am entitled to invite the wayfarer who has bespattered me with mud to scrape it off.

I desired to be told by William that the girl's signals meant his wife's recovery to health. He should have seen that such was my wish and answered accordingly. But, with the brutal inconsiderateness of his class, he said:

"She has had a good day; but the doctor—he—the doctor is afeard she is dying."

Already I repented my question. William and his wife seemed in league against me, when they might so easily have chosen some other member.

"Pooh! The doctor!" I said.

"Yes, sir," he answered.

"Have you been married long, William?"

"Eight years, sir. Eight years ago she was—I—I mind her when—and now the doctor says—"

The fellow gaped at me. "More coffee, sir?" he asked.

"What is her ailment?"

"She was always one of the delicate kind, but full of spirit, and—and you see, she has had a baby lately—"

"William!"

"And she—I—the doctor is afeard she's not picking up."

"I feel sure she will pick up."

"Yes, sir?"

It must have been the wine I had drunk that made me tell him.

"I was once married, William. My wife—it was just such a case as yours."

"She did not get better, sir?"

"No."

After a pause he said, "Thank you, sir," meaning for the sympathy that made me tell him that. But it must have been the wine.

"That little girl comes here with a message from your wife?"

"Yes; if she nods three times it means my wife is a little better."

"She nodded thrice to-day."

"But she is told to do that to relieve me, and maybe those nods don't tell the truth."

"Is she your girl?"

"No; we have none but the baby. She is a neighbor's; she comes twice a day."

"It is heartless of her parents not to send her every hour."

"But she is six years old," he said, "and has a house and two sisters to look after in the daytime, and a dinner to cook. Gentlefolk don't understand."

"I suppose you live in some low part, William."

"Off Drury Lane," he answered, flushing; "but it isn't low. You see, we were never used to anything better, and I mind when I let her see the house before we were married, she—she sort of cried because she was so proud of it. That was eight years ago, and now—she's afeard she'll die when I'm away at my work."

"Did she tell you that?"

"Never; she always says she is feeling a little stronger."

"Then how can you know she is afraid of that?"

"I don't know how I know, sir; but when I am leaving the house in the morning I look at her from the door, and she looks at me, and then I—I know."

"A green chartreuse, William!"

I tried to forget William's vulgar story in billiards, but he had spoiled my game. My opponent, to whom I can give twenty, ran out when I was sixty-seven, and I put aside my cue pettishly. That in itself was bad form, but what would they have thought had they known that a waiter's impertinence caused it! I grew angrier with William as the night wore on, and next day I punished him by giving my orders through another waiter.

As I had my window seat, I could not but see that the girl was late again. Somehow I dawdled over my coffee. I had an evening paper before me, but there was so little in it that my eyes found more of interest in the street. It did not matter to me whether William's wife died, but when that girl had promised to come, why did she not come? These lower classes only give their word to break it. The coffee was undrinkable.

At last I saw her. William was at another window, pretending to do something with the curtains. I stood up, pressing closer to the window. The coffee had been so bad that I felt shaky. She nodded three times and smiled.

"She is a little better," William whispered to me, almost gayly.

"Whom are you speaking of?" I asked coldly, and immediately retired to the billiard room, where I played a capital game. The coffee was much better there than in the dining room.

Several days passed, and I took care to show William that I had forgotten his maunderings. I chanced to see the little girl—though I never looked for an

her—every evening, and she always nodded three times, save once, when she shook her head, and then William's face grew white as a napkin. I remember this incident because that night I could not get into a pocket. So badly did I play that the thought of it kept me awake in bed, and that, again, made me wonder how William's wife was. Next day I went to the club early—which was not my custom—to see the new books. Being in the club at any rate, I looked into the dining room to ask William if I had left my gloves there, and the sight of him reminded me of his wife; so I asked for her. He shook his head mournfully, and I went off in a rage.

So accustomed am I to the club that when I dine elsewhere I feel uncomfortable next morning, as if I had missed a dinner. William knew this; yet here he was, hounding me out of the club! That evening I dined—as the saying is—at a restaurant, where no sauce was served with the asparagus. Furthermore, as if that were not triumph enough for William, his doleful face came between me and every dish, and I seemed to see his wife dying to annoy me.

I dined next day at the club for self-preservation, taking, however, a table in the middle of the room, and engaging a waiter who had once nearly poisoned me by not interfering when I put two lumps of sugar into my coffee instead of one, which is my allowance. But no William came to me to acknowledge his humiliation, and by and by I became aware that he was not in the room. Suddenly the thought struck me that his wife must be dead, and I—It was the worst-cooked and the worst-served dinner I ever had in the club.

I tried the smoking room. Usually the talk there is entertaining, but on that occasion it was so frivolous that I did not remain five minutes. In the card-room a member told me excitedly that

a policeman had spoken rudely to him; and my strange comment was:

"After all, it is a small matter."

In the library, where I had not been for years, I found two members asleep, and, to my surprise, William on a ladder dusting books.

"You have not heard, sir?" he said, in answer to my raised eyebrows. Descending the ladder, he whispered tragically: "It was last evening, sir. I—I lost my head, and I—swore at a member."

I stepped back from William, and glanced apprehensively at the two members. They still slept.

"I hardly knew," William went on, "what I was doing all day yesterday, for I had left my wife so weakly that I—"

I stamped my foot.

"I beg your pardon for speaking of her," he had the grace to say, "but I couldn't help slipping to the window often yesterday to look for Jenny, and when she did come, and I saw she was crying, it—it a sort of confused me, and I didn't know right, sir, what I was doing. I hit against a member, Mr. Myddleton Finch, and he—he jumped and swore at me. Well, sir, I had just touched him after all, and I was so miserable, it kind of stung me to be treated like—like that, and me a man as well as him; and I lost my senses, and—and I swore back."

William's shamed head sank on his chest, but I even let pass his insolence in likening himself to a member of the club, so afraid was I of the sleepers waking and detecting me in talk with a waiter.

"For the love of God," William cried, with coarse emotion, "don't let them dismiss me!"

"Speak lower!" I said. "Who sent you here?"

"I was turned out of the dining room at once, and told to attend to the library

until they had decided what to do with me. Oh, sir, I'll lose my place!"

He was blubbering, as if a change of waiters was a matter of importance.

"This is very bad, William," I said. "I fear I can do nothing for you."

"Have mercy on a distracted man!" he entreated. "I'll go on my knees to Mr. Myddleton Finch."

How could I but despise a fellow who would be thus abject for a pound a week?

"I dare not tell her," he continued, "that I have lost my place. She would just fall back and die."

"I forbade your speaking of your wife," I said sharply, "unless you can speak pleasantly of her."

"But she may be worse now, sir, and I cannot even see Jenny from here. The library windows look to the back."

"If she dies," I said, "it will be a warning to you to marry a stronger woman next time."

Now every one knows that there is little real affection among the lower orders. As soon as they have lost one mate they take another. Yet William, forgetting our relative positions, drew himself up and raised his fist, and if I had not stepped back I swear he would have struck me.

The highly improper words William used I will omit, out of consideration for him. Even while he was apologizing for them I retired to the smoking room, where I found the cigarettes so badly rolled that they would not keep alight. After a little I remembered that I wanted to see Myddleton Finch about an improved saddle of which a friend of his has the patent. He was in the news room, and, having questioned him about the saddle, I said:

"By the way, what is this story about your swearing at one of the waiters?"

"You mean about his swearing at me," Myddleton Finch replied, reddening.

"I am glad that was it," I said; "for

I could not believe you guilty of such bad form."

"If I did swear——" he was beginning, but I went on:

"The version which reached me was that you swore at him, and he repeated the word. I heard he was to be dismissed and you reprimanded."

"Who told you that?" asked Myddleton Finch, who is a timid man.

"I forgot; it is club talk," I replied lightly. "But of course the committee will take your word. The waiter, whichever one he is, richly deserves his dismissal for insulting you without provocation."

Then our talk returned to the saddle, but Myddleton Finch was abstracted, and presently he said:

"Do you know, I fancy I was wrong in thinking that waiter swore at me, and I'll withdraw my charge to-morrow."

Myddleton Finch then left me, and, sitting alone, I realized that I had been doing William a service. To some slight extent I may have intentionally helped him to retain his place in the club, and I now see the reason, which was that he alone knows precisely to what extent I like my claret heated.

For a mere second I remembered William's remark that he should not be able to see the girl Jenny from the library windows. Then this recollection drove from my head that I had only dined in the sense that my dinner bill was paid. Returning to the dining room, I happened to take my chair at the window, and while I was eating a deviled kidney I saw in the street the girl whose nods had such an absurd effect on William.

The children of the poor are as thoughtless as their parents, and this Jenny did not sign to the windows in the hope that William might see her, though she could not see him. Her face, which was disgracefully dirty, bore doubt and dismay on it, but

whether she brought good news it would not tell. Somehow I had expected her to signal when she saw me, and, though her message could not interest me, I was in the mood in which one is irritated at that not taking place which he is awaiting. Ultimately she seemed to be making up her mind to go away.

A boy was passing with the evening papers, and I hurried out to get one, rather thoughtlessly, for we have all the papers in the club. Unfortunately, I misunderstood the direction the boy had taken; but round the first corner—out of sight of the club windows—I saw the girl Jenny, and so I asked her how William's wife was.

"Did he send you to me?" she replied, impertinently taking me for a waiter. "My!" she added, after a second scrutiny. "I b'lieve you're one of them. His missis is a bit better, and I was to tell him as she took all the tapioca."

"How could you tell him?" I asked.

"I was to do like this," she replied, and went through the supping of something out of a plate in dumb show.

"That would not show she ate all the tapioca," I said.

"But I was to end like—like this," she answered, licking an imaginary plate with her tongue.

I gave her a shilling—to get rid of her—and returned to the club disgusted.

Later in the evening I had to go to the club library for a book, and while William was looking in vain for it—I had forgotten the title—I said to him:

"By the way, William, Mr. Myddleton Finch is to tell the committee that he was mistaken in the charge he brought against you, so you will doubtless be restored to the dining room to-morrow."

The two members were still in their chairs, probably sleeping lightly; yet he had the effrontery to thank me.

"Don't thank me," I said, blushing at the imputation. "Remember your place, William!"

"But Mr. Myddleton Finch knew I swore," he insisted.

"A gentleman," I replied stiffly, "cannot remember for twenty-four hours what a waiter has said to him."

"No, sir; but—"

To stop him I had to say: "And—ah—William, your wife is a little better. She has eaten the tapioca—all of it."

"How can you know, sir?"

"By an accident."

"Jenny signed to the window?"

"No."

"Then you saw her, and went out, and—"

"Nonsense!"

"Oh, sir, to do that for me! May God bl—"

"William!"

"Forgive me, sir; but—when I tell my missis, she will say it was thought of your own wife as made you do it."

He wrung my hand. I dared not withdraw it, lest we should waken the sleepers.

William returned to the dining room, and I had to show him that, if he did not cease looking gratefully at me, I must change my waiter. I also ordered him to stop telling me nightly how his wife was, but I continued to know, as I could not help seeing the girl Jenny from the window. Twice in a week I learned from this objectionable child that the ailing woman had again eaten all the tapioca. Then I became suspicious of William. I will tell why.

It began with a remark of Captain Upjohn's. We had been speaking of the inconvenience of not being able to get a hot dish served after one a. m., and he said:

"It is because these lazy waiters would strike. If the beggars had a love of their work they would not rush away from the club the moment one

o'clock strikes. That glum fellow who often waits on you takes to his heels the moment he is clear of the club steps. He ran into me the other night at the top of the street, and was off without apologizing."

"You mean the foot of the street, Upjohn," I said; for such is the way to Drury Lane.

"No; I mean the top. The man was running west."

"East."

"West."

I smiled, which so annoyed him that he bet me two to one in sovereigns. The bet could have been decided most quickly by asking William a question, but I thought, foolishly doubtless, that it might hurt his feelings, so I watched him leave the club. The possibility of Upjohn's winning the bet had seemed remote to me. Conceive my surprise, therefore, when William went westward.

Amazed, I pursued him along two streets without realizing that I was doing so. Then curiosity put me into a hansom. We followed William, and it proved to be a three-shilling fare, for, running when he was in breath and walking when he was out of it, he took me to West Kensington.

I discharged my cab, and from across the street watched William's incomprehensible behavior. He had stopped at a dingy row of workmen's houses, and knocked at the darkened window of one of them. Presently a light showed. So far as I could see, some one pulled up the blind and for ten minutes talked to William. I was uncertain whether they talked, for the window was not opened, and I felt that, had William spoken through the glass door loud enough to be heard inside, I must have heard him too. Yet he nodded and beckoned. I was still bewildered when, by setting off the way he had come, he gave me the opportunity of going home.

Knowing from the talk of the club what the lower orders are, could I doubt that this was some discreditable love affair of William's? His solicitude for his wife had been mere pretense; so far as it was genuine, it meant that he feared she might recover. He probably told her that he was detained nightly in the club till three.

I was miserable next day, and blamed the deviled kidneys for it. Whether William was unfaithful to his wife was nothing to me, but I had two plain reasons for insisting on his going straight home from his club: the one that, as he had made me lose a bet, I must punish him; the other that he could wait upon me better if he went to bed betimes.

Yet I did not question him. There was something in his face that— Well, I seemed to see his dying wife in it.

I was so out of sorts that I could eat no dinner. I left the club. Happening to stand for some time at the foot of the street, I chanced to see the girl Jenny coming, and— No; let me tell the truth, though the whole club reads: I was waiting for her.

"How is William's wife to-day?" I asked.

"She told me to nod three times," the little slattern replied: "but she looked like nothink but a dead one till she got the brandy."

"Hush, child!" I said, shocked. "You don't know how the dead look."

"Bless yer," she answered, "don't I just! Why, I've helped to lay 'em out. I'm going on seven."

"Is William good to his wife?"

"Course he is. Ain't she his missis?"

"Why should that make him good to her?" I asked cynically, out of my knowledge of the poor. But the girl, precocious in many ways, had never had my opportunities of studying the lower classes in the newspapers, fiction,

and club talk. She shut one eye, and, looking up wonderingly, said:

"Ain't you green—just!"

"When does William reach home at night?"

"Tain't night; it's morning. When I wakes up at half dark and half light, and hears a door shutting, I know as it's either father going off to his work or Mr. Hicking coming home from his."

"Who is Mr. Hicking?"

"Him as we've been speakin' on—William. We calls him mister, 'cause he's a toff. Father's just doing jobs in Covent Garden, but Mr. Hicking, he's a waiter, and a clean shirt every day. The old woman would like father to be a waiter, but he hain't got the 'ristocratic look."

"What old woman?"

"Go 'long! That's my mother. Is it true there's a waiter in the club just for to open the door?"

"Yes; but—"

"And another just for to lick the stamps? My!"

"William leaves the club at one o'clock?" I said interrogatively.

She nodded. "My mother," she said, "is one to talk, and she says to Mr. Hicking as he should get away at twelve, 'cause his missis needs him more'n the gentlemen need him. The old woman do talk."

"And what does William answer to that?"

"He says as the gentlemen can't be kept waiting for their cheese."

"But William does not go straight home when he leaves the club?"

"That's the kid."

"Kid!" I echoed, scarcely understanding, for, knowing how little the poor love their children, I had asked William no questions about the baby.

"Didn't you know his missis had a kid?"

"Yes; but that is no excuse for William's staying away from his sick wife," I answered sharply. A baby in

such a home as William's, I reflected, must be trying; but still—— Besides, his class can sleep through any din.

"The kid ain't in our court," the girl explained. "He's in W., he is, and I've never been out of W. C.; leastwise, not as I knows on."

"This is W. I suppose you mean that the child is at West Kensington? Well, no doubt it was better for William's wife to get rid of the child——"

"Better!" interposed the girl. "Tain't better for her not to have the kid. Ain't her not having him what she's always thinking on when she looks like a dead one?"

"How could you know that?"

"'Cause," answered the girl, illustrating her words with a gesture, "I watches her, and I sees her arms going this way, just like as she wanted to hug her kid."

"Possibly you are right," I said, frowning; "but William had put the child out to nurse because it disturbed his night's rest. A man who has his work to do——"

"You are green!"

"Then why have the mother and child been separated?"

"Along of that there measles. Near all the young 'uns in our court has 'em bad."

"Have you had them?"

"I said the young 'uns."

"And William sent the baby to West Kensington to escape infection?"

"Took him, he did."

"Against his wife's wishes?"

"Na-o!"

"You said she was dying for want of the child?"

"Wouldn't she rayther die than have the kid die?"

"Don't speak so heartlessly, child. Why does William not go straight home from the club? Does he go to West Kensington to see it?"

"Tain't a hit, it's an 'e. Course he do."

"Then he should not. His wife has the first claim on him."

"Ain't you green! It's his missis as wants him to go. Do you think she could sleep till she knowed how the kid was?"

"But he does not go into the house at West Kensington?"

"Is he soft? Course he don't go in, fear of taking the infection to the kid. They just holds the kid up at the window to him, so he can have a good look. Then he comes home and tells his missis. He sits foot of the bed and tells."

"And that takes place every night? He can't have much to tell."

"He has just."

"He can only say whether the child is well or ill."

"My! He tells what a difference there is in the kid since he seed him last."

"There can be no difference!"

"Go 'long! Ain't a kid always growing? Haven't Mr. Hicking to tell how the hair is getting darker, and heaps of things beside?"

"Such as what?"

"Like whether he larfed, and if he has her nose, and how as he knowed him. He tells her them things more'n once."

"And all this time he is sitting at the foot o' the bed?"

"'Cept when he holds her hand."

"But when does he get to bed himself?"

"He don't get much. He tells her as he has a sleep at the club."

"He cannot say that."

"Hain't I heard him? But he do go to his bed a bit, and then they both lies quiet, her pretending she is sleeping so as he can sleep, and him 'feard to sleep case he shouldn't wake up to give her the bottle stuff."

"What does the doctor say about her?"

"He's a good one, the doctor. Some-

times he says she would get better if she could see the kid through the window."

"Nonsense!"

"And if she was took to the country."

"Then why does not William take her?"

"My! you are green! And if she drank port wines."

"Doesn't she?"

"No; but William, he tells her about the gentlemen drinking them."

On the tenth day after my conversation with this unattractive child I was in my brougham, with the windows up, and I sat back, a paper before my face lest any one should look in. Naturally, I was afraid of being seen in company of William's wife and Jenny, for men about town are uncharitable, and, despite the explanation I had ready, might have charged me with pitying William. As a matter of fact, William was sending his wife into Surrey to stay with an old nurse of mine, and I was driving her down because my horses needed an outing. Besides, I was going that way at any rate.

I had arranged that the girl Jenny, who was wearing an outrageous bonnet, should accompany us, because, knowing the greed of her class, I feared she might blackmail me at the club.

William joined us in the suburbs, bringing the baby with him, as I had foreseen they would all be occupied with it, and to save me the trouble of conversing with them. Mrs. Hicking I found too pale and fragile for a workingman's wife, and I formed a mean opinion of her intelligence from her pride in the baby, which was a very ordinary one. She created quite a vulgar scene when it was brought to her, though she had given me her word not to do so. What irritated me even more than her tears being her ill-bred apology that she "had been 'feard baby

wouldn't know her again." I would have told her they didn't know any one for years had I not been afraid of the girl Jenny, who dandled the infant on her knees and talked to it as if it understood. She kept me on tenter-hooks by asking it offensive questions, such as, "Oo know who give me that bonnet?" and answering them herself, "It was the pretty gentleman there;" and several times I had to affect sleep because she announced, "Kiddy wants to kiss the pretty gentleman."

Irksome as all this necessarily was to a man of taste, I suffered even more when we reached our destination. As we drove through the village the girl Jenny uttered shrieks of delight at the sight of flowers growing up the cottage walls, and declared they were "just like a music 'all without the drink license.'" As my horses required a rest, I was forced to abandon my intention of dropping these persons at their lodgings and returning to town at once, and I could not go to the inn lest I should meet inquisitive acquaintances. Disagreeable circumstances, therefore, compelled me to take tea with a waiter's family—close to a window, too, through which I could see the girl Jenny talking excitedly to villagers, and telling them, I felt certain, that I had been good to William. I had a desire to go out and put myself right with those people.

William's long connection with the club should have given him some manners, but apparently his class cannot take them on, for, though he knew I regarded his thanks as an insult, he looked them when he was not speaking them, and hardly had he sat down, by my orders, than he remembered that I was a member of the club, and jumped up. Nothing is in worse form than whispering, yet again and again, when he thought I was not listening, he whispered to Mrs. Hicking, "You don't feel faint?" or "How are you now?" He

was also in extravagant glee because she ate two cakes—it takes so little to put these people in good spirits—and when she said she felt like another being already the fellow's face charged me with the change. I could not but conclude, from the way Mrs. Hick-  
ing let the baby pound her, that she was stronger than she had pretended.

I remained longer than was necessary, because I had something to say to William which I knew he would mis-  
understand, and so I put off saying it. But when he announced that it was time for him to return to London—at which his wife suddenly paled, so that he had to sign to her not to break down—I delivered the message.

"William," I said, "the head waiter asked me to say that you could take a fortnight's holiday just now. Your wages will be paid as usual."

Confound them! William had me by the hand, and his wife was in tears before I could reach the door.

"Is it your doing again, sir?" William cried.

"William!" I said fiercely.

"We owe everything to you," he in-  
sisted. "The port wine—"

"Because I had no room for it in my cellar."

"The money for the nurse in Lon-  
don—"

"Because I objected to being waited on by a man who got no sleep."

"These lodgings—"

"Because I wanted to do something for my old nurse."

"And now, sir, a fortnight's holi-  
day!"

"Good-by, William!" I said, in a fury.

But before I could get away Mrs. Hick-  
ing signed to William to leave the room, and then she kissed my hand. She said something to me. It was about my wife. Somehow I— What business had William to tell her about my wife?

They are all back in Drury Lane now, and William tells me that his wife sings at her work just as she did eight years ago. I have no interest in this, and try to check his talk of it; but such people have no sense of propriety, and he even speaks of the girl Jenny, who sent me lately a gaudy pair of worsted gloves worked by her own hand. The meanest advantage they took of my weakness, however, was in calling their baby after me. I have an uncomfortable suspicion, too, that William has given the other waiters his version of the affair; but I feel safe so long as it does not reach the committee.



### TO A LOVER

WOULD you exchange for your fair mistress' hair

All that the rich Achæmenes did hold,

Or all that fertile Phrygia's soil doth bear,

Or all the Arabians' store of spice and gold?

Whilst she to fragrant kisses turns her head,

Or with a courteous coyness them denies,

Which more than he that speeds she would have sped,

And which sometimes to snatch she foremost hies?

*Horace.*

# The Constant Nymph



by

## Margaret Kennedy

*In Three Parts...Part III*

### CHAPTER XVII.

PRESTER JOHN" was produced at the Nine Muses in the course of the spring with a success which justified all the risks taken by an enterprising management on its behalf. Charles Churchill, at his breakfast table, read a glowing account of it in the newspaper, the very same paper which had reported Sanger's death so bleakly a year ago.

"We've changed all that!" thought Charles, holding the column close up to his shortsighted eyes. "'A masterly performance'—h'm—h'm! 'Surely the audience at the Nine Muses is the most intelligent in the world.' Why do they always say that, I wonder? I suppose because it's the sort of audience which reads the notices next morning. 'The enterprise of this undertaking'—dammit! The whole column's about the Nine Muses! Ah, no! Here we have it! Sanger—'neglected too long—a national possession!' Well, well! 'A shattering

message!' Heaven help us! 'And yet, surely, the most vocal music ever written—the second act one vast lyric!' What's this? What the devil's this? 'Mr. Leyburn's conducting'—Leyburn! 'We venture to think that Mr. Leyburn a little mistook the subtle tempo of the first chorus!' But where, I wonder, was my precious son-in-law?"

Lewis should have conducted the opera; Charles knew that. He also knew that Florence was building on its success; that she regarded the engagement as a great thing. He scratched his head and read the column again and tried to suppose that Leyburn was a printer's error for Dodd, but it would not do. Very much dispirited, and wondering if some untoward accident could have occurred at Chiswick, he went on with his breakfast.

By the second post came a short, sad little note from Florence to say that the Sanger opera had gone off quite well, but that Lewis had fallen out with

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the management at the last moment so that Edward Leyburn had taken his place.

"Edward did very well," she wrote, "considering the short notice."

"But she was set on it!" muttered Charles, looking at her letter. "Since when has she learned to take a disappointment quietly? This is serious! I shall really have to go and see."

He had a horror of interfering parents. He had been determined, from the first, to let Florence manage her crazy marriage in her own way. He had said his say and she would not listen to him. She was old enough to know her own mind. But, on the other hand, he was very fond of her. He was sure that she was unhappy, and there was something in this note which read like an appeal for help. He thought he knew where he could assist her. She did not say so, but for some weeks he had guessed that she was growing rather tired of her young cousins. It was probably time they were removed from Chiswick. At least he could help her over that.

Soon after the production of "Prester John" he discovered that he could spare a week-end to his daughter, so he packed his bag, wired to Strand-on-the-Green, and set off.

He was received by his niece Teresa, who told him that Florence had gone into the country for the day, before his wire came. The children, she said, were out fishing, and Lewis had some men with him. Would Charles have tea with her, or would he rather sit with Lewis? Charles voted for tea promptly, whereupon she went to the top of the stairs and launched a flood of shrill, abusive Italian downward at Roberto. Then she came back into the drawing-room and sat herself down to entertain her uncle.

Charles looked her over sharply and with a sense of surprise that was faintly

pleasant. He had seen her only once, just after her arrival in England. Since then she had grown a good deal and he rather liked her looks. She was plain, perhaps; at least, she was not like any of the Churchills. But she was a friendly creature and seemed ready to be civil to him. He began at once on his mission and asked how long she intended to stay at Strand-on-the-Green. She said she supposed she would stay until she had to go.

"Oh!" said he. "Then you are depending on my daughter to turn you out?"

"You mean she doesn't want us?" said Teresa, looking startled.

"I've never heard her say so. Still, as a guest, you must feel it a little——"

"A guest!"

She opened her eyes.

"Aren't you a guest? What is a guest, do you think?"

"A person who's been invited——" she began, and pulled up, turning quite pink. Then she recovered herself and said: "But children, you know, are forced to be somebody's guests, if they have no home of their own. It's part of the undignified state of being a child."

"Do you call yourself a child, miss?"

"I do not. But your daughter Florence does, and on that account she has to keep me in her house."

"I see. Fourteen, aren't you?"

"Fifteen. I've had a birthday since I last saw you."

"Dear me! I'd forgotten. Very remiss of me!"

"Let me give you some tea."

He recognized a slight inflection of Florence in the way she said this. But there was nothing of Florence in the meal which she had ordered; it consisted largely of a cottage loaf and a trayful of breakfast cups.

"I said the big cups," she commented, with some complacency. "Men always like them."

Charles beamed. He liked but seldom got them. He said:

"Fifteen! An uncle has no business to forget these things, has he? Yes! Two lumps if you please, my dear."

He pulled out his pocketbook.

"I think it's clever of you to have got it right within a year," said Teresa. "Bread? What is this for? Me? Oh!"

"Rather belated, I'm afraid. You'll be telling me you're sixteen before we've finished tea."

"What am I to do with it?"

"Get yourself—"

He could not at all guess what she would be likely to get for herself, so he said vaguely that it was to be something pretty.

"A pretty thing," said Teresa thoughtfully, looking at the note in her hand. "With all my heart; the next pretty thing I see. Have another cup?"

"And how did 'Prester John' go off?" asked Charles boldly.

"Really I—couldn't say," she answered slowly.

"Why? Weren't you there?"

"Oh, yes. We were all there. But we don't understand the people in this country. We thought it was very bad. It was only half rehearsed. And that Mr. Leyburn can't conduct, can he?"

"That I can't say. Why didn't my son-in-law conduct?"

"Lewis? Of course! He's your son-in-law. How funny! I never thought of you and him as being related. Well, no! He was going to do it, and then he couldn't."

"Why not?"

"Well, you know, 'Prester John' is such a very poor opera. Sanger thought so himself; my father, I mean. It was awful that they chose just that one; Lewis hated it. He was very, very fond of Sanger. And at the rehearsals he got wild because it was so bad. And at last he couldn't bear it and they had a quarrel."

"So that was it! Then it wasn't a success?"

"But it sounded like one! They clapped! And cheered! I've never seen Sanger's work better received, not even the good pieces. Always it's been just a few people. But these were all so enthusiastic; and the papers next day didn't any of them say how bad it really was. We couldn't help laughing at first. It was so ridiculous. And Lewis laughed, too, quite loud. And then, when Florence told us to be quiet, I looked round and saw that nobody else was amused."

"Where were you sitting?"

"In the front; in the stalls. And we got there late, so we began badly somehow."

Charles was getting a fairly accurate idea of the sort of evening that Florence must have spent. She had admitted beforehand that she should feel a trifle conspicuous, escorting Sanger's children to hear a first English performance of Sanger's music. The most intelligent audience in the world was largely composed of her personal acquaintances. It was a pity if his nephew and nieces had attracted even more attention by behaving ill. And Lewis, too, had been told to be quiet. It was monstrous! Teresa got a severe little lecture upon civil manners in public places, which she took very meekly. She promised to do better another time.

"There won't probably be another time," Charles told her. "I don't expect Florence will take you to another."

"Oh, yes, but she will. Lewis is to conduct his symphony at the Regent's Hall in May. We are all going to that, and I promise that we will behave."

"Oh?" he murmured, half to himself. "She's pulled that off, has she?"

"Oh, no," said Teresa quickly. "That has nothing to do with her. My brother-in-law, Jacob Birnbaum, managed that. He's Lewis' friend. When we want

anything of that kind done he always sees to it."

Charles perceived that the word "we" indicated a community to which his daughter did not, presumably, belong. Teresa gave him to understand that the concert at the Regent's Hall would be a really important affair.

"Why can't she leave the fellow to paddle his own canoe?" he thought. "If he really has a pull with these Jew financiers, they'll do more for him than all her gentlemanly friends put together."

Aloud he said:

"So she's forgiven you, has she?"

"Not quite," said Teresa, after a little consideration. "But she will. She has so much"—no adequate English word arrived, so she shyly tried another language—"so much *bonté*!"

Charles agreed. It was the right word for that particular benevolence with which Florence seasoned her obstinacy.

"But, Uncle Charles!"

"Yes, my dear?"

"When you said about guests—Do you mean that we ought to go away?"

"Not yet," he said hastily. "Not until some suitable establishment is found for you."

"You know that Sebastian has got a scholarship in Doctor Dawson's choir school? He wants to go there. And Line wants to go on the stage. Only in France, because she can speak Racine. Have you heard her? She can really."

"No. But Florence tells me that she shows promise."

"Well, but there's a school where she can go in Paris. Would that be a suitable establishment?"

"I dare say. I've come here, partly, to discuss it. If you children have professions that you want to pursue—"

"I know. I've none."

"Well! That's no harm. It's early yet."

"But Florence says that I'm to go to school again."

"Would you like that?"

"I couldn't endure it," she said, with a quiet intensity which startled him.

"But, my dear! What's to be done with you? I'd be quite ready to fall in with your views if you wanted to specialize. With your upbringing, it's late in the day to begin upon general education. I quite see that. I'm sure it's best for the other two to go their own ways. But you say yourself you've no—"

"I can't help it. I know what it is to have talent. I know that I've none. I love music. But that's not enough. I love apples, but I don't mean to be a greengrocer. It has to be something more than that; something that comes so far first that there isn't any question of a second."

"And there's nothing that comes quite first with you?"

She was silent and he wondered how any one could be so misguided as to treat her like a child. The sad thoughtfulness of her face was old; older, in its calm resignation, than any expression he had ever caught on the face of his daughter.

"Everybody has something that comes quite first," she said at last. "But sometimes, you know, it's complicated."

"Not always a thing," suggested Charles gently. "Often, especially for a woman, it's a person. That is more complicated."

At once he felt that he had been a little impertinent. He said hastily that she must not distress herself; very few people had got a profession at fifteen. She must not let herself be hustled by the precocity of the rest of her family. But in his heart he felt that he was misstating her case. Her trouble was not the bewildered groping of adolescence for a goal in life, but rather the

sad finality of a woman who has beheld her destiny too young. His next attempt was toward another kind of consolation. Life, he suggested, was, after all, a very amusing affair. It was wise to cultivate a taste for it. There were so many entertaining things to be done. For a young woman, just entering upon the world, the opportunities of enjoyment were boundless. Didn't she think so?

"Not in a girls' school."

"Well, no. Probably not. But education is a good investment."

"Is it? Are you educated?"

"Comparatively speaking—yes."

"Are you so very happy? Happier than an uneducated man?"

"I've been singularly fortunate in my life, Teresa. I've had remarkably little to bear; less, I dare say, than you have had already. But I can honestly say that, in such trouble as has come to me, a philosophic outlook, which is the fruit—one of the fruits—of good education, has been of use to me."

"Can't an uneducated person have a philosophic outlook?"

"By the light of natural wisdom? Yes. But it's harder and slower. And you must realize this, Teresa. Unhappiness is, to a certain extent, the sure lot of every one of us. We cannot escape it. We can only brace ourselves to endure it. But we have it in our power to do a great deal toward securing our happiness. That does lie in our hands. We can enlarge our tastes and interests and perceptions. That is the chief use of education—to widen the resources."

"Putting your eggs into a lot of baskets instead of one?"

"It's safer, you know."

"Oh, safety! I don't think we care so very much about it."

Again that odd use of "we;" Charles remembered it later. He agreed that too much is sometimes sacrificed for security.

"Well, but you say that education helped you. What kind? What have you had that you value most?" she asked.

"A thorough grounding in the classics," said Charles promptly. "For it's the key to the humanities. And, on top of it, a man should travel and see life."

"Very well. I've traveled. And I've seen life."

"Pardon me! I disagree with you. I don't think you have seen much life as yet. Of its raw beginnings you may have seen something, but not of the finished product. To see life to any purpose you must be conversant, at least, with the ways of polite society. A polite society. I don't care where."

"Society at school was not polite. I could tell you tales that would curl your hair! Upon my word, I often thought there was more civility in my father's house. Have some more tea?"

"Thank you. I will have a third."

She did not tell him that he had had five, but pursued her theme, asking guilelessly:

"Could I have a thorough classical grounding?"

Charles told her, in some detail, that she certainly could. It was a subject very close to his heart; all his life he had hoped great things from the higher education of women. Nothing, he maintained, could form the mind of a young girl better than the study of Latin and Greek. He would teach her enough arithmetic to enable her to keep accounts neatly, the elements of geography, the dates of the kings of England, and then he would plunge her into classical literature. In her teens, she should read nothing else. He had meant to educate his daughter in this way, but had been defeated by the other educationists who surrounded her. At fifteen she had been so very anxious to form his mind that she gave him no opportunity of meddling with hers. For

this he blamed Cleeve; he had a suspicion that Cleeve was full of earnest, cultivated women who read Robert Browning and wanted degrees. A dreadful type! They had corrupted Florence. But the young female now so persistently supplying him with tea was virgin soil; none of these wretched, efficient governesses had been at her. And she seemed intelligent.

"I suppose," she said, "that I'd get a classical grounding at school?"

"Yes, I dare say," grumbled Charles, "in this disgusting new pronunciation that I can't make head or tail of."

"I don't believe that you have any more use for schools than I have."

"You must learn to get on with the other women."

"Must I?"

"Yes, you must. A boy goes to school for that, to find his level in a crowd of youngsters of his own age. And so does a girl, I suppose. But I declare it's all they're good for, these places!"

"Well, but which do you prefer? A woman who is very charming or a woman who knows a lot?"

"A charming woman can be very well informed."

"Yes, but would you rather have an ignorant woman with charm or a well-informed woman without?"

"You're driving me into a corner! Of course I admit that the world would come to an end if women weren't charming. But they'll persist in being that, thank Heaven, whatever sort of education they get. And, Teresa, one of the most charming women I ever knew came to grief simply, so it seemed to me, for want of a wider education—a better-regulated mind."

He paused and sighed. Teresa looked at him and asked suddenly:

"Was that my mother?"

"Yes, my dear."

"Were you very fond of her?"

"She was our only sister. We were very proud of her."

"Did she go to a school like Cleeve?"  
"Cleeve! Not she!"

She saw that he had no high opinion of Cleeve, and presently she began to tell him funny stories of the good ladies there and her adventures during her brief school career. He found her very entertaining. Her way of talking had a turn that was at once innocent and shrewd, infantile and yet full of observation, adorned with a quaint, half-literary idiom, and full of inflections borrowed from other languages. She was refreshing, after a long surfeit of cultured provincialism. He saw ignorance in her, and childishness and a good deal of untutored passion; but of pose there was no trace and she was without small sentimentalities or rancors. He thought that he discerned the delicate beginnings of a noble mind, a grandeur of outlook which would well repay development. It struck him that the Sanger genius, driving all the other children to some practice of the arts, might here take the form of a particular aptitude for companionship, that rare touch on life which makes some souls so valuable to their friends. He could not imagine why Florence had not written more warmly about her. She was such very good fun. And if, as he half guessed, there was some tragedy behind her; that was her own business and she was perfectly able to deal with it herself. She was a courageous little creature. He wished that he could have asked her how Florence and Lewis were getting on; it was a point upon which her opinion would have been useful.

It was an odd thing, but he had a queer sort of liking for his son-in-law. If it had not been for their unfortunate relationship, he could have seen several merits in the young man. To begin with, it was enjoyable to remember that this was the son of Fulsome Felix. A great deal could be forgiven to him on that account. Charles was forced frequently to put up with the company of

Sir Felix Dodd, who was always coming to Cambridge in some capacity, or other which could not be ignored. He could endure now the atmosphere of a glorified board school which always clung to that gentleman, remembering with inward chuckles the blot in the scutcheon. Lewis must have been too much even for the Dodd complacency.

And that night, when Lewis joined Charles and Teresa in the drawing-room, he was at his unusual best. He brought with him his two friends, Doctor Dawson, who was already known to Charles, and an obscure organist from somewhere or other. It was the first time that Charles had ever seen him in company of his own choosing, for his friends were a little nervous of coming to Strand-on-the-Green. He was talking of his work in a simple and modest way that showed how completely he was at his ease. Charles, by long habit, was quick to sift the cleverness of a clever young man for any grains of real gold that might lurk there. In this case he soon divined something more solid than mere promise. He knew nothing of music, but Dawson did, and he caught, now and then, a trace of something more than respect in the attitude of his old friend; there were signs there of affection and a deep admiration.

"The fellow has real ability," thought Charles. "Dawson knows. Poor Florence! She's right there, as far as I can see."

Presently it occurred to him, with a slight shock of surprise, how very well Teresa fitted into the picture. She seemed almost like Lewis' belonging. She had made one or two quite pertinent remarks; that was natural, since they were on ground which was familiar to her. But her chief business was to minister to them and this she did rather nicely; her hospitality had no polish but it was suitable, somehow, to the company. She made a fresh pot of tea and, finding that Doctor Dawson had missed

his lunch, she fetched up some corned beef. Charles, watching how she slapped it down on the table with a kind of offhand geniality, thought that she would have made a very good barmaid. Then it struck him that it was her co-operation which had given Lewis the air of being so pleasant a host. He could imagine the pair of them entertaining with the greatest success, not in this house but in some queer, unmistakable house of their own. He told himself that no party can go well unless the host and hostess are inspired by the same social ideals. It is upon such occasions that the inner concord between man and wife is made most manifest. Only that Lewis and Teresa were not man and wife. For a moment he was almost thinking of them as if they were, because they ought to have been.

This idea grew upon Charles as he watched them, and it seemed strange to him that a thing so obvious should have occurred to nobody else. To his eyes it grew plainer every moment. The pair seen thus together, at a moment of unconscious ease, contrived to produce the united front, the pleasant assurance of a perfectly well-matched couple. Teresa was, probably, the only woman in the world who could manage this man; she would respect his humors without taking them too seriously, she would never require him to behave correctly, and, if he annoyed her, she would reprove him good-humoredly in the strong terms which he deserved and understood. How could they have failed to see it? Lewis was a fool! If he had married little Teresa, she would have made a man of him, whereas mated with Florence he was nothing but a calamity.

How much of a calamity was abundantly demonstrated when Florence returned, an elegant stranger breaking in upon them, the owner, one remembered, of a room which was not usually strewn with kitchen knives and corned beef. Immediately the party went to pieces;

a sort of constraint settled upon them. Not that she failed in hospitality; she was most charming to everybody, and especially kind to the young organist because he was insignificant and had a provincial accent. Always she would be nice to her husband's friends. Charles thought she managed very well, for nobody made any attempt to help her out. Her manner to her husband was, he noticed, a little staccato; she was nervous. He surmised that there had been a fine explosion after "Prester John," but of this there were only the faintest indications. He hardly knew how to diagnose the sense of a false note, a roughness, a want of decorum in her posture. Something very wrong was happening.

He watched her closely and at last discovered the flaw. It shocked him excessively. She was being—there was not other word for it—consistently nasty to her young cousin. In fact, she seemed scarcely able to let the child alone; her sarcasms and her biting reproofs were so continuous as to sound almost mechanical, like a bad habit. She was exhibiting in that quarter a most lamentable failure of the "*bonté*," which used to be an integral part of her disposition. Circumstances were becoming too much for her natural generosity. She was not only jealous of Teresa's standing with Lewis but of her intimacy with all his friends. They had been, when she came in, a close, convivial group; she had tried to join in, talking cleverly, but they had not quite accepted her. She got homage for her beauty and her wit, but that was not entirely what she wanted. She wished them to consider her as one of themselves and this distinction they reserved for Teresa, an impudent chit, who had only to put in her oar, quote an opinion of Sanger's, to make them stop and listen to her. Florence was not going to be cut out, in her own drawing-room, by an unformed schoolgirl, and she was con-

sequently a great deal too profuse in small snubs.

It was, in the father's eyes, pitiful that a beloved daughter should thus expose her sufferings in an exhibition of petty jealousy. But he had not observed the situation for very long before he saw that it held great dangers. Teresa bore it all well enough; he could not help admiring the large good temper with which she held her own in the contest. Perhaps she did not grasp the underlying spite of the attacks made upon her. It was for her friend to feel resentment on her behalf; nothing of their byplay was lost upon Lewis. He seemed to receive all Teresa's wounds with a double bitterness. If Florence had wished to drive him from her, she could not have chosen a better way.

"A pretty kettle of fish!" thought Charles wrathfully. "Does she want to bully those two into making a bolt of it? The sooner that little girl is packed off to school, the better!"

He had quite a good opinion of Teresa but, recollecting how she had been brought up, he had little reliance upon her principles or her prudence in such an affair. He was almost sure that she loved this undeserving wretch; when once he had suspected the thing every gesture that she made, every word that she spoke, bore witness to it. Should Lewis wake to his own need of her, nothing in the world could save her; her security lay in his blindness. She obeyed no laws; she knew none. She would inevitably follow the man if he beckoned to her; Charles could think of no possible reason why she should not. And here was Florence ordering her off to bed as though she were a tiresome baby, quoting some absurd doctor's order about bed at seven three nights a week. She was skipping out of the room when she caught her uncle's eye and came back to him.

"Good night, *lieber Herr!*"

"Good night, baggage!"

"How long are you staying with us, if one may ask?"

"A week-end."

"Dear me! That's uncommonly short! I'd hoped you might stay long enough to give me a classical education."

"I'll begin to teach you Latin if you'd like. Then, later on, you can come to Cambridge and we'll begin Greek."

It seemed to him that any snare was worth trying with so wild a little bird.

"I know Latin!"

"You do, do you?"

"Some I do." She sang in a steady, poised little voice: "*Cum vix justus sit securus.*"

Lewis, across the room, stirred slightly and turned his head to listen. Charles thought:

"What's the good of school? She'll run away."

"That," she was saying, "means that even good people will scarcely be safe, poor things!"

### CHAPTER XVIII.

Charles, Florence, Lewis, and Teresa sat together at breakfast. Sebastian, who always rose early, had finished his meal and could be heard in the music room practicing the "Forty-eight Preludes and Fugues" with precision and energy. Paulina was not yet down and a lecture on unpunctuality was awaiting her. Teresa was blowing on her tea to cool it in a vulgar way; Florence wearily told her not to.

"And why must you do your hair in that way?" she complained. "Dragging it all back! It's terribly unbecoming; your forehead is quite high enough as it is. Why don't you cover it?"

"If I did, I'd look like one of those little girls in shops called 'Cash.' Wouldn't I, gentlemen?"

Charles and Lewis left off reading their letters and looked at Teresa's forehead. They liked it. Charles said:

"If you want to look pretty, hussy, you'd better grow a fringe and hide it."

Lewis wondered; he scarcely knew why it was that he found Tessa so beautiful to look at. He said:

"In a year or two, Florence, when you've fattened her, she'll look like that picture in your bedroom—that very startled lady with a towel around her head."

"The Delphic Sibyl? What nonsense, Lewis!"

"But she is," said Charles. "She's very like! I hadn't seen it before. It's on a smaller, slighter scale, of course—"

"The Delphic Sibyl has a very noble face."

"So has Tessa," said both the men.

Florence pursed her lips and said rather acidly:

"I'm sorry, I'm afraid I don't see it. Except that there's a sort of Michelangelo look about all the family."

"My admirers," said Teresa complacently, "are mostly of the opposite sex."

"I think you had better do that entrance examination to-day," Florence retorted. "If you go to Harrogate at Whitsun, they'll want to know how to place you. You can do it in the drawing-room, this morning, where it will be quite quiet."

"I don't expect I shall be able," said Teresa gloomily.

"Oh, yes, you will. It's quite easy. Only the junior entrance. Miss Cassidy thinks that, as you are under sixteen and very backward, you'd better be entered as a junior, till they have got you on a bit."

"How does she know I'm backward?"

"Because I told her. It's not your fault. You'll pick up."

Teresa said nothing but gazed tearfully at her plate of porridge. Florence exclaimed with a little laugh:

"Oh, dear me! I don't believe you

like being told you're backward! Funny, funny child! She's getting quite pink!"

"She's saying all this for your good," put in Lewis, leaning round the table to see how pink Teresa was. "You should be grateful to her; I've often thought it was a pity you had such a high-stomached opinion of yourself."

"I can talk three languages besides English."

"Yes, your languages are good. But you know nothing else."

"I've read Shakespeare."

"I should hope you had," Florence told her crushingly.

"The juniors at Cleeve went to bed at eight o'clock. And in recreation they did things for each other's albums. And they mightn't get books out of the library. I'd sooner go to hell."

"You must work hard and try to get into the senior school as soon as you can. And you must grow up a little. You're such a baby for your age."

"Shall I have to play hockey? At Cleeve I didn't."

"You won't unless you're fit for it," put in Charles testily.

"Of course not," agreed Florence. "But by the autumn term, when hockey begins, I dare say she will be able to play."

She knew this was not likely, but life would be unbearable if Teresa were allowed to make a fuss about her health. She needed bracing in every direction. Lewis asked gleefully how long she was to stay at this school.

"Three years," said Florence. "Yes, father! It will be quite that, I should think, before she catches up."

"Well," muttered Teresa, "there are some things I shall know. At Cleeve we didn't know we had to pay to go to church. We thought it was free. We nearly died of fright the first time we saw that bag coming round. We thought we'd be turned out. I had to take sixpence belonging to the girl next

me; she'd left it on her prayer book and didn't see me pinch it."

"Stealing! You've no morals, hussy!"

"Not at all. The sixpence was going in the bag, anyhow. Poor Lina had to pull a button off her drawers to put in."

"I hope somebody told you that these things are not done," said Florence, with a frown at Charles, who guffawed.

"Quite a number of people did. That was what we disliked at Cleeve, being taught how to behave by five hundred people at once. It's the way they do things in this country."

"Well, if you run contrary to public opinion you must expect to suffer for it. But I hope you'll be wiser now."

Lewis passed his cup for more coffee and got his guns into position. He thought that his wife ought to be paid out for the way she was baiting Teresa, and he embarked upon a counterattack.

"I think I agree with Tessa," he said to Charles. "This is not a country I like. I'm leaving it for good as soon as my concert's over."

Florence started and gave him a quick glance. In the heat of the scene she had made after "Prester John" he had declared that he detested England and would live with her no longer. But he had not repeated the threat, and she had come to believe that he had not really meant it.

"No!" said Charles, blinking at Lewis over his spectacles. "Is that so?"

"Didn't Florence tell you we've almost agreed to part?"

"It is fortunate that you can agree upon such a delicate subject," murmured Charles.

"She, you see, can't live in comfort anywhere else, can you, Florence?"

"Not permanently," said Florence.

She was determined that he should not draw her into an argument at this time and in this company. He was probably only teasing her. If he really persisted in his desire to live abroad she

would let the house and go with him, but not just yet. He might change his mind again, and she could do nothing until she had disposed of the children. She thought that it might be a wise plan to let him go alone, after the concert, and when he had seen how he liked it he might give up this foolish way of talking. In any case, nobody in the world should know that it hurt her.

Later, when she was alone with her father, she gave him her version of the affair. Lewis, she said, had got a temporary attack of nerves and was best out of England. She herself would follow him as soon as she had got rid of Teresa. Charles, at this, looked very thoughtful, and she was afraid that he was going to ask awkward questions. But at last he surprised her by saying:

"Do you know, my love, I'm not altogether sure that I think you're wise in your manner to that little girl."

Instantly she was up in arms.

"You encourage her, and it's not kind. That pert manner may be very amusing, but it will get her into trouble later on, and it shouldn't be laughed at."

He had spent most of the night thinking on this matter. It seemed to him imperative that Florence should be warned in some way. But he hardly knew how to begin. He ventured:

"Do you think this plan of school is really wise? Is she strong enough?"

"That's the only doubt. Otherwise, it's the very thing she needs—firm discipline and to have the nonsense laughed out of her by other children of the same age."

"She's old—in some ways—for her age." He hesitated.

"On the contrary, she's a great baby for her age."

"That's where you are mistaken, I think. She would respond better if you treated her as a responsible person."

"How can I, when she behaves like a young hooligan?"

"This life, remember, is new to her."

"She isn't attempting to adjust herself to it."

"It strikes me that she's absorbing new ideas at every pore. Give her time and they'll bear fruit. But truly I don't think she'll have enough elbow room at school."

"These Sanger children seem to think that they have merely to say that they don't like a thing to be free of the necessity of enduring it. It's sheer unruliness."

"I thought that it would not take you very long to exhaust the charms of the Sanger children."

"I can do with the others. But I don't like Teresa."

"That's it!" Charles now spoke rather sternly. "You don't like her, and you make no secret of it. Is that just?"

"Oh, I've tried to be just. But she's so hard! She has such a forward, disagreeable nature."

"Try to see things from her point of view a little. Think how she's been brought up! Not only is she ignorant of all the finer shades of conduct, but she's grown up with no conception of the word 'ought.' She has only her instincts, her affections, and her quick wits to guide her. Fortunately, these are all singularly uncorrupted; at least, so it seems to me."

"Does it?"

"Yes, it does, when you think of the sort of life she's been used to. She's intensely receptive. And now, when she's almost formed, as far as intelligence goes, she is uprooted and brought here. She's pitchforked into a new world, and we expect her to conform at once to our standards, our very complicated standards, of existence. She discovers, piecemeal, the principles underlying our ideas of conduct. She has to assimilate, in less than a year, a number of social and ethical facts which were put into you before you were out of your cradle. At one moment she's

scolded for telling a lie and at the next for picking her teeth. She has, by the light of her own wisdom, to sort out the relative values of these things. Can you wonder that she finds it hard?"

"It's the same for the other two."

"You are willing to make allowances for them. Besides, they are children, and it's no insult to treat them as such."

"You think I'm unfair?"

"I think you are, my dear."

"So does Lewis," she muttered bitterly.

"Ah?"

"He encourages her." Florence flushed and broke out in a kind of dull anger: "I wouldn't have thought you'd take her part. But she will be that kind of woman; the kind that men always defend. The kind that men call 'a good sort.' Antonia is like that. You're a man and you don't see it."

"I think she has a good disposition."

"You're mistaken! She's not to be trusted. Those girls have bad blood in them, somewhere—something corrupt. They've never been innocent. She'll go to the bad as fast as she can, unless she's watched."

"Florence! You are letting yourself get into a state of mind that does you no credit! I couldn't have believed that you could speak so!"

Charles spoke in great anger, though he was wrenching with pity for her, remembering the tolerant, unsuspecting creature that she used to be. She remembered, too; she had a sudden vision of herself going off to the Tyrol to fetch the Sanger children home, of her kindness, of the thousand delicate scruples which, in those days, hedged and bounded every word she said. She had been so slow to think evil and so free from base imaginings. What had happened to her? Life had become a shipwreck, a desperate, snatching, devil-take-the-hindermost affair. She began to think that she would leave this house even if Lewis changed his mind about

going abroad. It was an unlucky place. It had witnessed too much of the wreckage, the gradual disintegration of her old, civilized self, and the emergence of the untutored creature who talked as she had just been talking.

"Perhaps I'm unfair," she admitted. "I'll try to do better. Really, I will. But it angers me, the thoughtless way that you and Lewis egg her on."

"Lewis is very fond of her, I think."

"He is. He's fond of all the children."

"I know. I really think he is worried, when you threaten her with school. He is afraid she will not be happy. You should respect his feelings, my dear, if I may venture to say so. He is not, I imagine, a man who feels affection easily."

But there he went too far. She replied coldly that she quite understood Lewis and his feelings. Charles hastily agreed; he was diffident and afraid of going too far; he did not think that he was justified in saying much more. But before they parted he had induced her to reconsider her sentence of school at Harrogate.

Meanwhile Teresa was busy in the drawing-room with her examination paper, and Lewis found her there, an hour later, sobbing distractedly over her sums.

"Oh, Lewis," she wailed, "do come and help me! I've done this sum about papering the room nine times, and—"

"Why on earth do you do it at all?"

"The answer comes out that it would take five million yards of paper to paper a room under twenty foot square, with a lot of windows! Well, that must be wrong, because rooms that size don't—"

"Let me look at it! Nothing would induce me to go to a school if I didn't want to. It's your own fault. My dear child! You've papered this room absolutely solid! You must find the surface space of the walls, not the cubic con-

tents of the room. You'll run away, I suppose, as soon as she sends you?"

"Where could I run? I've nowhere. Look at this literature paper! And this: 'Say what you know about the retreat from Moscow.' Do you know anything? I don't. Could it be anything to do with that Empress Catherine, do you think, in Sanger's opera? It had some things about Moscow."

"I know some poetry about her," said Lewis hopefully. "It begins: 'In Catherine's reign, whom glory still adores, the greatest—'"

"Poetry is no use to me. There's a bit here quoted and I have to say who wrote it. It says: 'God's in his heaven, all's right with the world.' That seems a darn silly sort of a piece, doesn't it?"

Lewis agreed, with unnecessary violence.

"Though, mind you, some poetry is all right. Do you know a piece called 'Elegy, Written in a Country Churchyard?' It's lovely! I learned it at Cleeve. It says:

"For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey,  
This pleasing, anxious being e'er resigned,  
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,  
Nor cast one longing, lingering look behind?

"On some fond breast the parting soul relies,  
Some pious drops the closing eye requires;  
E'en from the tomb the voice of Nature cries;  
E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires!"

She thought these lines so moving that her voice became quite tearful as she recited them. But Lewis was not listening. He had picked up from the table a penny exercise book and saw that it was full of unformed writing. He had just read:

Our early occupation exhausted us so much that we did nothing else remarkable this day of which there is nothing to report save that Sanger threw a bottle at Linda, thinking that it was empty. But it had Greea Chartreuse in it and for this misfortune we are all smarting. We took some breakfast on a tray to our dear and beloved Lewis, who keeps late

hours both ways. But he, lying in bed, said take it away, I don't want any, I have a little headache, rejecting us with many oaths, so that it took our most endearing persuasions to induce him to swallow. But in a little while he became more pleasant in his conversation, and I must confess that never, not even in his very worst moments, do we find him entirely disagreeable. We love him too well.

"What's this?" he asked, turning the pages.

She snatched it from him, crying: "You mustn't look at that! It's my diary."

"Let me, Tessa! I was reading something about myself. Am I often mentioned?"

"Sometimes." She grew very pink. "Let's get on with these sums!"

The next sum was about trains crossing each other on a bridge. At the sight of it she collapsed into tears again.

"Oh, dear! Oh, dear! What shall I do? What shall I do? I can't! I cannot bear it!"

"Come with me!" The words broke from him before he knew that he had thought them. "Dearest, dearest Tessa! My dear love! Don't cry! Don't let them make you cry! Come with me!"

"Come with you? Where?"

"Anywhere! When I go, after the concert."

"Florence would never allow it."

"No," he said, more collectedly. "You'd have to do it without asking her."

"You mean—really—that we should run away?"

Yes. He discovered that he did mean that.

"Well," she said, after a pause; "there are points in it. It's better than being like the cat in the adage."

"The—"

"Don't ask me what an adage is, for I don't know. But it's better than making—I dare not wait upon 'I would.'"

"I don't follow you. It's better than going 'o school."

"It's very good of you to be so concerned about it."

"I don't know that it is so very good of me," he said grimly. "You know very well why I want you to come."

"I'm not sure. Could you let me have it in plain English?"

"In plain English—you're too dear to leave behind. I love you; I can't do without you. And if you are going to be so unhappy at school, that settles it."

"Love me? What do you mean by that? There's a song:

"*Away, false man, I know thou lov'st,  
I know thou lov'st too many.*"

"No, Tessa. This is a star part—a solo!"

"A duet you mean? Looks to me more like a trio. Why did you marry Florence?"

"You know why."

"Yes, I do know. It was unfair to both of us, if you loved me. That's what I'm complaining of."

"I know. But it's done now."

"And you want it undone? Why couldn't you have thought of all this before? You were so mad to get her that you forgot all about me. If you'd waited a bit, you could have had me."

"Could I? Then—then— Oh, Tessa, say it!"

"I loved you. I'd have had you. I promised myself to you ever so long ago —when first I ever began to think about love. I thought then that I wouldn't ever have any man but you. I don't think I ever will. But it's too late now."

"No, it isn't. You still love me, don't you?"

"What's that got to do with it? I don't see that I can come now. I'd feel bad about Florence. I'd feel as if you were her belonging. And I'm her cousin, you know; and I've lived in her house for months and months. She's been very kind to us, though lately she's been a little snappy, and I don't blame her with you going on the way you do. I should feel mean if I ran off with her

husband. When first you said that you were going off after the concert, I thought of asking you to take me, but then I saw it wouldn't do. If you were anybody else at all nice, I'd go with you to get away from school. And if it wasn't for Florence, I'd rather go with you than anything in the world. But, as it is, I don't see my way to it. If I did, I shouldn't enjoy myself. The pangs of unpeased remorse would gnaw my vitals."

She looked at her diary as she said this, as if she admired her own language and would have liked to write it down. Lewis remonstrated with her scruples.

"I should have thought it was perfectly obvious that my marriage with Florence has come to an end. We practically agreed as much, the night after 'Prester John.' You heard me say at breakfast that we should probably part; she showed no signs of minding, did she? I expect she's very glad to get rid of me."

This sounded reasonable enough. Marriage, in Teresa's experience, did not last longer than was absolutely convenient to both parties. She had never supposed that the Dodd household was a permanent thing and lately it had showed every sign of going to pieces. Florence had made no protest, at breakfast, when Lewis proclaimed the state of affairs. Charles had accepted the thing quite conversationally. They had, of course, an unreasonable habit of concealing their sentiments; often they would not exhibit their anger. But in a case like this, Teresa calculated, they would surely speak up. She hesitated, and then said:

"I dare say that's so. But it's not my affair. It may be a very good thing that you should go; and if you go, I suppose you'll have to get another wife. But I don't think she can be me. Everybody would know and they'd say we'd been carrying on in this house behind poor Florence's back. It would be

awful for her, especially with the ideas she's got. She'd think I was a traitor. I really couldn't. I don't want to be a viper in anybody's bosom."

"Will you stop talking in that strain?"

"It's a very good strain. At least, it's got good intentions. A person must do what they think right, mustn't they?"

Lewis had nothing to say to this. His case was a little complicated in that he was not quite sure of his own wishes. Certainly he desired her company on his travels; he did not think that he could do very well without her. She was such a darling, and, now that he came to think of it, the only thing that had kept him so long at Strand-on-the-Green. But he wanted also that she should be happy and safe; and he was not absolutely convinced of his own fitness to look after her. She had been evasive when he asked if she still loved him; yet the crucial point of the whole matter lay exactly there. If she was still bound by that simple, uncompromising love of her childhood, to which she had just confessed, then nothing on earth must be allowed to hold them apart. But possibly she had changed. He questioned her, but could get no definite answer, though he saw that her eyes were full of tears. At last he said impatiently:

"Then you love Florence so terribly much that you'll put up with three years of school for her sake?"

"Not three; one," she explained. "Then I'll rebel and I think Uncle Charles will back me. I must—what do you call it?—compromise! That's a useful thing to do, Lewis. It shows you've got a well-regulated mind. I don't believe you know how."

"I don't, thank God!"

"Well, I do."

"Then you've changed."

"Perhaps I have. It's not my fault. Nobody can help changing. Things are done to them and they change. If you think of all that's happened since San-

ger died and we were brought here! I seem to have had so many new things to think about. You can't forget anything that you've once learned. You can't go back to being what you were. I wish you could. I'm sorry we came here, any of us; we'd have been better to stay with the sort of people we were accustomed to. But as I am here I'd better see it through. I shall stay and be a lady."

"What's the good of being a lady if you're unhappy?"

"Unhappiness," she said, in the voice of Uncle Charles, "is bound to come to every one of us. I don't think we'd escape it in each other's company, Lewis."

"Nor do I. But I want your company."

"Then want must be your master, for I've said my say."

"There's been plenty of it."

"Well, you want to know such a lot."

"Only one thing, and I don't know it yet."

But she would not tell him. She knew that telling, for her, would be surrender. To say the thing would be so irrevocable that she could not then betray the truth by leaving him. To her, avowal and compliance went together. So she gathered up her papers and her diary and left him still uncertain. He was striding up and down the room, fighting it out with himself, when the face of Charles was poked round the door. It looked blank when it saw Lewis. Charles had stolen up, as soon as Florence was out of the way, to do Teresa's sums for her.

"Tessa?" said Lewis vaguely, in answer to his question. "She—she went away. I don't know where, I'm afraid."

Charles was just going to withdraw when he thought better of it. He came in and shut the door.

"I want to tell her," he said, "that she needn't stay very long at this school if she really dislikes it."

"She's got nowhere else to go," said Lewis defiantly.

Charles glanced out of the window and said:

"Look at that long line of barges the *Mary Blake's* got! I've an idea that I want Tessa in Cambridge some time."

"You want her?"

"She can make tea. My housekeeper is a fool and can't. But I couldn't have her just yet. She wants petticoat government for a little longer."

"She might like that," said Lewis thoughtfully.

"You think so? You've known her longer than the rest of us."

"Yes. She—she's—"

Lewis blinked and sought for words. Charles waited.

"She's different from anybody else," confided Lewis at last.

"I agree."

"School! You know it might spoil her."

"I don't think so."

"Well, if she stays," urged Lewis, "you'll see after her?"

"Stays?"

"Doesn't run off, I mean."

"You mean she might run off if we press her with school? My dear fellow, where could she run to?"

Lewis said nothing.

"She's taken you into her confidence?" suggested Charles.

"Taken! I've always been there."

"Quite so. And you think she will run unless we drop the idea of school?"

"No," said Lewis truthfully. "She says not. She says she'll try it for a year."

"Says not! And you say she will, is that it?"

"Yes," said Lewis absently.

"By all that's wonderful!" thought Charles. "The little creature's had the sense to turn him down. He's asked her and she's turned him down!"

Lewis, who had been conducting so fierce an argument with himself that he

scarcely knew that he had been talking to Charles, now said:

"I want her—to do the best she can for herself."

"She had better surely remain under the protection of her friends, of the people who love her?" suggested Charles.

Lewis shook his head at this and brought out a final melancholy statement:

"Nobody," he said, "could love her better than I do."

And Charles believed it. In the midst of his exultation he discovered that he was quite sorry for the young man.

## CHAPTER XIX.

"A bowl?" exclaimed Charles. "What bowl is that?" He had hardly attended to his daughter's conversation until something about a bowl arrested his mind.

"A sort of orange luster. Very beautiful, isn't it, Lewis?"

"What?" said Lewis, without looking up.

He was reading an old exercise book which seemed utterly to absorb him.

"Tessa's bowl."

"Has Tessa got a bowl?"

It seemed strange to Charles that Teresa should ever own anything so concrete as a bowl. Her very clothes seldom looked as though they really belonged to her.

"She bought a bowl with the birthday money you gave her. You must see it; it's lovely."

"Fancy Tessa buying a bowl! She'll drop it."

"I was surprised that she had the sense to hit on anything so good."

After her recent incredible demonstration of sense, Charles could not be surprised at anything in Teresa. He said that he would like to see the bowl, and Florence, going to the drawing-room door, called for it to be brought.

Lewis looked annoyed. He had discovered Teresa's diary lying about, and he did not like to be interrupted until he had made himself acquainted with all its secrets. He was learning all that he wanted to know about the state of her heart. But he knew that, if she saw it in his hands, she would make a great scene and call public attention to a proceeding which the others might consider a little ungentlemanly. So, when he heard her coming, he dropped it behind the sofa and joined in the conversation.

"What do you want a bowl for?" he asked mistrustfully.

"He told me to buy a pretty thing, and it was the first I saw that I wanted."

"Admirable!" said Charles, examining it.

"Not at all," stated Lewis. "Tessa doesn't want a bowl. She oughtn't to want one."

"Why on earth not?" Florence was indignant. "It's really an exquisite thing."

"She has no house," explained Lewis, taking the bowl and balancing it on one hand. "People with no houses ought to know when they are well off."

"Take care! You'll break it!"

"Bowls lead to houses. Houses are mainly to keep bowls in. If Tessa had a house she could buy as many bowls as she liked. She'd be done for. As it is, she should beware. *C'est le premier pas qui coûte.* Oh! There, Tessa! I've broken your pretty thing!"

Charles could never quite make up his mind if it was an accident; but the lovely, brittle treasure lay in shivers on the floor.

"Lewis, you wretch!" cried Florence. "Never mind, Tessa dear! We'll get you another."

"I'm a lady," said Teresa primly, "so I won't say what I think of him."

Lewis went onto his knees at her feet and began to collect the little bits. Flor-

ence told him that he might, at least, say that he was sorry.

"What shall I say?" he asked, looking up at Teresa. "Shall I say that my peace of mind is shattered forever?"

"My bowl wasn't all that valuable, I'm afraid."

"It was rather valuable," Florence reminded her.

"No bowl," she stated loftily, "is worth the peace of mind of the lowest and the least, much less our ray of sunshine."

She got, in return for this, a look from Lewis which silenced her. She turned away and said:

"We must find a little coffin to put the remains in."

Florence caught sight of her face and mistook the blanched sorrow in it. She offered consolation:

"I'm sure we can replace it, my dear; can't we, father?"

Charles produced a five-pound note.

"Here you are, hussy! The next pretty thing you buy give to me to keep. He's not to be trusted with them."

"He's too clever," she said darkly. "That's what's the matter with him."

"Are you coming to Chiswick Park station to see me off?"

He was on the point of departure, after a very uneasy week-end, and he was anxious, if possible, to get a few words alone with her, that he might strengthen her resolution and temper her dread of school with promises of an early release. Florence had pleased him greatly by her obvious efforts to be more just; the household, as a whole, had a tranquil air and he thought that things might do very well provided that Teresa stayed the course. In any case, he had said as much as he dared to all of them.

"I'd like to see you off," said Teresa, with a tentative glance at Florence, for she was not quite sure if she would be wanted.

"She can't come," explained Charles.

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"She has to go to Richmond. So nobody will see me off if you don't."

"I'll come, too, and carry your suit case," offered Lewis.

Florence looked pleased at his civility, but a little surprised, for he did not often offer to carry guests' luggage.

"Sebastian will come, too, and carry Uncle Charles' walking stick," said Teresa, who did not want to walk home alone with Lewis if she could help it.

"Not I," said Sebastian, who was reading a score in a corner of the room. "I'm busy."

"Od's bodikins!" exclaimed Teresa. "Don't you want to say good-by to your uncle?"

This oath was secret signal among the Sangers and meant a demand for help. They had found it useful during their life in England. Sebastian immediately pricked up his ears and loyally said that perhaps he would come to the station after all. Paulina, attentive to the password, asked Teresa if she should not also want to see her uncle off.

"No, I don't think so," said Teresa, who feared that, if four of them went, they might walk home in couples.

As it was, they went in couples: Charles and Teresa in front and Lewis behind with Sebastian and the suit case. On the way Charles said what he could to his niece, and painted her future in the most amazingly attractive colors, if only she would be patient and go to school for a little time. She answered very sensibly and seemed disposed to do right as far as she was able. He believed that the worst struggle was already over for her, and he left her at Chiswick Park station in a fairly comfortable frame of mind.

He was no more ready to credit a young person with sense than are most men at his time of life; but when he did so, it was with an almost over-lavish generosity. Himself full of the garnered wisdom of years, he was inclined to confuse Teresa's intuitive

sagacity with that other more reliable article which can only be the fruit of experience. This was a mistake which he could not have made had she been a young man, for he knew all about young men. His experience of girls had been, on the whole, very small and his chief impression of them was that they were quite unlike boys, creatures of a weak, irrational temper, but without any great intensity of feeling. The women he had known best had been unreasonable rather than passionate. So that having made certain that Teresa was upon the right course, he was not disposed to doubt her fortitude in pursuing it. Besides, he had observed the skill with which she had avoided another interview with Lewis. She was quite competent to manage the affair in her own way.

Lewis, however, had been reading her diary and had made up his mind. He was a little staggered by the history of faithful, ungrudging devotion which had been thus revealed to him. It seemed as though a final separation was not any more to be thought of; as though all the love he could give was but a poor return for hers. He wanted to tell her about it, and he said, as the train with Charles in it rattled out of the station:

"I'm not sure that I want Sebastian just now."

"Well, I do," said Teresa. "His opinion is always sound."

She explained that she had taken Paulina and Sebastian into her confidence. Paulina had advised her to go with Lewis, but Sebastian was very much against it.

"Most officious of him," complained Lewis.

"I don't understand what you're after," said Sebastian. "Do you want her for your wife?"

"Yes," said Lewis.

It was exactly what he did want. It seemed to him that Tessa was all that

a wife should be: tender, loyal, his other self, the only creature in the world to whom he would turn for prudent counsels.

"But that's just exactly what she can't be," Sebastian pointed out. "You've got a wife already. She'll be your—"

"Hold your tongue, Sebastian. And you, Tessa, mind the traffic!"

The question was suspended until they had got themselves across Chiswick High Road. Then Sebastian began again:

"But what will she be?"

Lewis threw a glance of rather shamefaced appeal at Teresa, who suggested that, as she was not coming, it was of no consequence.

"Well, I don't approve at all," said the boy firmly. "It wouldn't be suitable for you, now that you're almost a lady really. Why can't he get somebody like Linda?"

"I would suit him better than Florence does," mentioned Teresa, as though anxious to be fair to both sides.

"Well, could anybody suit him worse?"

"I know him so well."

"All the more reason for knowing there's no sense in it."

"Of course, I never could make out what she saw in him."

"I dare say she thought he would improve."

"Improvement wouldn't hurt him."

Lewis did not like this. They talked across him as if he was not there. The interview was not turning out according to plan, but what could he say, in front of Sebastian?

"I wish," he said, "that you wouldn't talk about me as if I was some awful fate that either you or Florence had to endure."

"Well, so you are," retorted Sebastian. "I heard Ike say once that he always pitied Sanger's women, but that he was a great deal sorrier for yours."

"You see, Lewis, you don't always know your own mind," complained Teresa. "Sanger at least knew that."

They had an unsatisfactory walk. Teresa and Sebastian teased Lewis all the way until they got to Kew Bridge; but this baffling strategy only made him all the more obstinately determined, and quenched his last scruples. At last, when they were leaning on Kew Bridge watching the tide, he succeeded in taking her by surprise.

"Well, then," he flung at her, "go to your school! But I happen to know that you consider it a damnable charnel house, and that you would rather fling yourself into the smoky abyss of Etna if it were handy."

She recognized the quotation and grew livid with fury.

"Of course, if you've been reading my diary—"

"You shouldn't leave it about."

"I know it was foolish of me. One doesn't expect, in Florence's house, to have people like you wandering around."

She abused him for several minutes without ever repeating herself.

"All this billingsgate," he said, "only tells me one thing."

"And anyhow the bit about the charnel house was poetic license. I wrote it to relieve my feelings."

"Oh! Is all your diary poetic license?"

"Most of it."

"Still, making allowances for that, I'm sure now—"

"If you'd had eyes in your head, you could have been sure before, without going and reading my private diary."

"Still I was modest. I didn't like to be sure."

"What weren't you sure of?" asked Sebastian, puzzled.

Lewis and Teresa were silent; he wanted to hear her say it, and she was afraid. Sebastian looked from one to the other, and exclaimed in immense surprise:

"Do you love him, Tessa?"

"He thinks so," she said rather sternly.

Lewis looked embarrassed, as though he had been accused of a fearful indiscretion. He had nothing to say for himself. The long silence which followed was broken by Sebastian, who said that he thought he should like to go to Camden Town. He considered that the conversation had taken a difficult turn, impossible for three people to sustain, and an omnibus for Camden Town was just coming across the bridge. Teresa, deciding that flight was the only remedy for her situation, exclaimed that she would come, too.

"You've no money," said the prudent Sebastian. "And I've only enough for myself."

"I've a five-pound note."

"He'll give you the change all in half-pence."

"Well, Lewis must have some. Here, Lewis! Lend me half a crown!"

Lewis, dazed, produced a handful of silver. She snatched a coin and jumped up on the bus which had stopped beside them.

"Wait a minute," cried Lewis. "I haven't finished."

"I have."

She was whirled away from him. Lewis stood on the curb gaping after the bus and saw her climbing up to the top, her long plaits slapping her back and her little brother at her heels. Away under the bright April sky she went, past the houses and the busy shops, down to Hammersmith Broadway.

At last he pulled himself together and started back to Strand-on-the-Green. But before he got home he changed his mind. He would endure no more of her mockery; she must not be allowed to return from Camden Town and find him ignominiously there. He would go away; without a word he would disappear, and she could see how she liked

it. In any case he hated the place and would live there no longer. So he returned to Chiswick Park and took the train for town. Strand-on-the-Green saw nothing of him for a week, and Florence went about the house looking as if the world had come to an end.

As for Teresa, she jolted along on the top of her bus and was at first very unhappy. It had been hard to leave Lewis so; but it had, at least, been final. She cried a little into a clean handkerchief, which she unexpectedly found in her coat pocket. Sebastian looked at her with compassion but said nothing until they were past Turnham Green Church. Then he asked:

"But are you really going to this school?"

"I suppose so. I don't care what I do."

"I expect you'll learn a lot there," he said.

"I don't feel as if I'd much more to learn. There's nothing left remarkable beneath the visiting moon."

"That's nonsense," quoth he.

"I dare say. But it's how I feel."

"Uncle Robert," said Sebastian, after a long pause, "says that the young can't know what real sorrow is."

"Does he? Silly old donkey! Look, Sebastian! What's that funny place?"

"That's Olympia, where they have the Military Tournament that Ike was telling us about."

"Oh, I should like to see it! Do you think we could get Ike to take us before we go to school?"

"We might ask him. I can't see what you want to call Uncle Robert a silly old donkey for, Tessa. He may be right. We can't know. We haven't been old yet. When you are grown up you may have worse times than you've had already."

"Oh, no," said Teresa decidedly, craning to get a last look at Olympia, which she thought an admirable building. "I'm sure I never shall."

In this her wisdom had instructed her, for she never did.

### CHAPTER XX.

It was nearly a week before Florence could bring herself to go in search of Lewis. To begin with, she would not admit that there was anything strange in his absence. He had wild ways. He would come back. She resolutely banished from her mind the tormenting suspicion that he had deserted her. It was bad enough, it was horrible, to know that such a thing should so easily seem possible; it could not really happen.

When, after three days, her fears became more clamorous and insistent, she clung desperately to her dignity. She had said of Evelyn Churchill that it was degrading for a wife to pursue her husband. She would do nothing. She would take no notice. But she wandered about the house with a feverish, mechanical energy and a look as though she were always listening for something.

She had plenty to do, for Paulina was to be dispatched to Paris, with a suitable outfit, at very short notice. A convenient escort having turned up, the child was being got ready in a hurry. There was no peace for anybody until the morning when, howling loudly, she was handed over to her disconcerted traveling companions at Victoria.

Florence had refused to take Teresa and Sebastian upon this final expedition, fearing a scene upon the platform. They were very sulky about it and she was not surprised to hear, when she got home, that they had run off somewhere. Roberto thought they must have gone up to town, because Teresa had on her best hat.

"Oh, well," sighed Florence, "it doesn't signify. They'll come back, I suppose."

It was too much to hope that they

had gone for good, but she was glad to get them out of the house for a little while. They were a trial, poor children, though she had come lately to better terms with Teresa, who was more civil and tractable in consequence of a sort of promise that she should not go to school before the autumn.

There was a pile of letters for Lewis in the hall, some of them looked quite important. It was most inconvenient not knowing where to send them. They could, of course, go down to the hall where he would hold his Sunday rehearsal; Florence thought that she might send, with them, a courteous note, apologizing for the delay in forwarding and suggesting that he should give her an address. That would not look too much like pursuit; it was the merest common sense. At present the ridiculous pile, which grew larger every day, advertised to everybody in the house her ignorance of his whereabouts. To Millicent, who called that afternoon, she felt compelled to offer an explanation:

"Look! Isn't it stupid of Lewis? He's gone off and forgotten to leave me an address. What on earth am I to do with these? Unless he writes or comes I can't get hold of him before the Sunday rehearsal."

"Gone off?" said Millicent blankly. "Where?"

"That's what I'd like to know," complained Florence, with a laugh which she hoped was convincing. "He went off on Saturday, while I was out. He's the vaguest creature. I rather think he may have gone into the country. He does, sometimes, when he's working, you know."

"But my husband saw him last night——" began Millicent, and broke off, gaping excitedly.

"Saw him? Where did he see him?"

Millicent looked her over for a second and then said:

"Having supper at the Savoy.

Doesn't look as if he was out of town, does it?"

"N—no. Only it's funny he doesn't write or telephone about his letters."

"Very funny."

"Was he alone, do you know?"

"Oh, no. Jewish-looking people, Hope said they were. At least, the men were Jewish looking."

"Oh, yes. He knows a lot of Jews," said Florence at once. "Come out and sit in the garden. It's quite warm."

She felt that she might conceal her unhappiness better in the garden. She had been so wretched lately that she could almost believe that anxiety and depression were stamped all over the walls of her charming house, like the damp coming through. This prying young woman would be sure to smell it out. They went into the garden and sat under the mulberry tree and she tried to reestablish the pose of the serenely confident wife.

She had come lately to feel that Lewis was not entirely to blame for his attitude toward his sister. Millicent could be very disagreeable sometimes. This afternoon she was unbearable. Nothing would interest her. She sat playing with her pearls and staring in front of her with a little smile, while Florence plowed on through politics and the arts and even descended to social small talk in order to avoid family discussion. At last, after a prolonged silence, she said:

"I hope you put it across Lewis for the way he behaved over that Sanger opera. You don't mind my being frank, do you? He ought to be made to understand that he can't behave like that. The whole of London is talking about it."

"Oh, are they?" thought Florence viciously. "You mean that you are talking about it to the whole town."

Aloud she said that Lewis was apt to display his opinions a little too frankly.

"A little! You should hear the Ley-

burns! Of course, rudeness sometimes pays. But it should be discriminating rudeness, not to the wrong people. He's so wholesale. He always was."

And Florence learned that the Leyburns were never going to ask him to their house again; that a set was being made against the performance of the "Symphony in Three Keys;" that even old Sir Bartlemy said that half an hour was the utmost that he could stand of young Dodd at a time. All this was said in a tone of superficial raillery very difficult to answer; Millicent was careful not to pass the limits permissible to a plain-spoken sister.

"By the way, what have you done with Teresa? She hasn't gone to Paris with the little one, has she?"

"I don't know what will be done with her. She's delicate: I doubt if she ought to go to school. She has queer faints."

"That's a pity. I should send her and take the risk, if I were you. What is it? Heart? They take very good care of them at these schools."

And as Millicent pulled on her gloves, she observed thoughtfully:

"She wouldn't be as easy to find a husband for as the pretty little Birnbaum. Well! I must be off. So nice to have seen you, my dear!"

She got up and Florence followed her through the house, explaining how childish Teresa was for her years, how undeveloped.

"Nearly sixteen, isn't she?" said Millicent, pausing on the doorstep. "I shouldn't wonder if she knew a thing or two. Good-by! Next time you lose Lewis, I should advertise. You know—the agony column: 'Come back! All forgiven and forgotten!' Or you might try the Birnbauers, mightn't you?"

And she was gone, walking lightly down the river path.

Florence turned into the house and looked again at the letters, and decided that really she had better try the Birn-

baums. If he was dining with Jewish-looking people, it was very possible that Jacob might be able to trace him. She would go and take some flowers to Tony and sit with her a bit; that was no more than an obvious duty. And she would just mention that she had no address for forwarding letters, and Tony would tell Jacob and Jacob would tell Lewis and Lewis would write, perhaps.

She set off for Lexham Gardens with a large bunch of iris; but Antonia's room seemed to be so full of flowers already that there was hardly space for more. It was a peculiar room, eloquent of luxury and wealth, and yet dirty and untidy, with the kind of sluttish disorder in which the Sangers felt most at home. Even the monthly nurse had not succeeded in making it look like a sick room. There was a piano in it, and several decanters and a mixer stood among the medicine bottles on the chimney piece, while cigar ash was spilt about everywhere.

Antonia, looking very well and incredibly beautiful, lay in an enormous bed, her satin counterpane perfectly strewn with the books, fruit, sweets, cigarettes, and gewgaws which Jacob bought for her every time he went out of the house. She exclaimed joyfully when she saw Florence:

"Oh, my dear! Why didn't you come before? Have you seen my funny baby?"

"Dear Tony! How are you feeling?"

"Have you seen my little boy? Oh, he's ugly! Ho! There! Rachel! Bring in the *Bübchen*!"

"Wait a little," responded a guttural voice from an inner room. "In t'ree minute I bring him."

"Oh, Florence, I've been longing to show him to you. He's the ugliest thing you ever saw. Ike says he doesn't think he can be mine, he's so ugly. I think he's uncommonly like his dad, but I'm too nice to say so. Push those horrid garments off that chair and sit down."

"My dear! How are you?"

"Oh, I'm quite all right. Never felt better. But I felt very queer on Sunday. You know, I never expected it would go on so long; I began to feel very funny just after breakfast, and of course I thought the *Bübchen* would turn up then and there. And old Rachel hadn't come because she wasn't fixed to come till Monday. And Ike was out. And, you know, I'm so shy of all the servants in this house, they're so grand. I didn't like to tell them what was the matter with me. And there was nobody I could tell but Lewis."

"Lewis!"

"Yes, he was still in bed because he had a headache, because they'd been out late the night before. And I went wandering round the house in the most awful state of mind. And then I felt rather better, and I wondered if it would do me any good if I went out and took a ride on a bus. And then I felt funny again; really awful! And I got so desperate, thinking that my baby would be born before Ike or anybody came to help me, that I went up and woke Lewis. Oh, and he was so nice! You can't think how kind he was! He got up at once and dressed in two seconds and sent off one of the maids running for Rachel, and another for Ike, and another for the doctor, because we didn't know any of their numbers, because Ike threw the directory out of the window at a cat two nights before. And then he went down and made me a cup of tea. Wasn't it clever of him? And he told me funny stories about how Ike once tried hiring a Chinese cook. Oh, he can be kind, when he likes! I was a bit frightened, but I couldn't help laughing. And then Ike and Rachel and all the servants came tearing in. And the thing didn't finish till late in the evening; I was ever so much worse later on, only luckily I didn't know I was going to be. And Lewis and Ike sat with me a long time to cheer me up, and

sang bits out of 'Otello.' And Rachel sang, too. She's got a nice voice, though she is a monthly nurse. She's Jacob's first cousin, you know. He has some very funny cousins. Her brother keeps a pawnshop in the Old Kent Road, but he's quite rich."

They were interrupted by the entrance of Rachel with Antonia's baby. She was a frowsy, elderly Jewess, who looked as if she had got into a nurse's uniform by mistake. But she was, none the less, at the top of her profession, and Jacob had known what he was about when he secured her services.

"Look at him, Florence," crowed the little mother. "Isn't he a horror?"

He was certainly a plain child and so ridiculously like Birnbaum that Florence wanted to laugh. She prodded him gently, with a grudging, awkward tenderness. In the abstract she did not like babies until they were old enough to crawl and prattle and be amusing. Very young ones she found a little monotonous. Of course, she wanted one herself, but that was a different matter.

"He's got a lot of hair," she said.

"Yes. But Rachel says it will all come off," said Tony sadly. "He'll be worse still when he's bald."

And she pressed him to her heart and kissed the top of his threatened head and whispered some inaudible, loving remark into his ear. Plainly she thought him the world's wonder. Something in her face stung Florence almost unbearably; she could not watch it. She got up and wandered about the room, looking at the Gainsboroughs that Jacob's friend had collected. Presently she asked:

"But is Lewis staying here?"

"Lewis?" said Antonia. "Oh, yes. Didn't you know?"

"My dear Tony! Lewis is a most trying man. He walked out of the house last week and forgot to leave an

address. I've been left without the slightest idea where he could be."

"Florence!" Antonia opened her eyes very wide. "You didn't know? But when Tessa and Sebastian came here this morning, surely——"

"Did they come?"

"Oh, yes. Didn't you know? They've gone out now with Lewis and Ike to Stavgröd's recital. They'll be back any minute."

"I'm sorry they came. I'd no idea of it. I hope they didn't tire you."

"That's quite all right. I see stacks of people, don't I, Rachel? I had a dinner party here last night. But how like Lewis to forget to tell you he was here! Surely Tessa and Sebastian knew, didn't they?"

Florence could not tell her. Privately she believed that they did and that the whole Sanger family was plotting against her behind her back. But in truth they had known nothing of it. Their visit to Lexham Gardens had been pure impulse and nobody could have been more surprised to find Lewis there than was Teresa, who wished genuinely to keep out of his way.

Florence made an attempt to retreat before the return of the concert party; she felt as though she could hardly trust her temper. But she could not get away in time. A joyous hubbub was heard in the hall while she was bidding Antonia good-by, and in they all burst in the most remarkable spirits. Jacob came first, vainglorious, swelling with pride over his lovely wife and ugly son, flinging down a fresh armful of gifts upon the already loaded bed, kissing Tony, kissing the baby, kissing his cousin Rachel, almost kissing Florence when he discovered that she was there. Behind him came Lewis, Teresa, Sebastian, Nils Stavgröd, and some odd friends with raucous voices and jocular manners. Florence was quite bewildered by all the noise and laughter, and began to be concerned about An-

tonia. But she need not have troubled. Tony was more than equal to it. She pulled a shawl a little way across her white breast and her baby, shook hands with everybody, and called on Jacob to furnish them with cocktails. To Lewis she said severely:

"Why didn't you tell your poor wife that you were coming to us? She didn't know where you were."

Lewis explained that he had left home to get away from his wife. He had shot one look at Florence as he came in, a gleaming, baleful, sullen look, and now he seemed determined to ignore her. She said composedly:

"I only wanted to forward his bills. There are a good many waiting for him. Come, children! I think we'd better go. Antonia oughtn't, I'm sure, to have such a crowd in the room."

"That is no matter!" cried Jacob. "She adores company, do you not, my angel?"

"I do not forbid it," put in Rachel. "A little party is cheerful, *nicht wahr?*"

So Florence stayed because she saw that she could not get her family away. But she sat a little apart from their circle and succeeded in looking as if she did not belong to them. With an increasing disgust she listened to their conversation. There was, lavishly displayed, the serene, entralling beauty of Antonia's motherhood; it was the only good thing in the room. But no one seemed to have any reverence for it; their language profaned it. Florence marveled that she should ever have found their speech naïve and amusing; nowadays it nauseated her. And there was Tony giving Stavgröd a detailed account of her confinement, apparently in explanation of her absence from his concert! They were all loud in their regret that she had not been there. Stavgröd had played the Kreutzer Sonata quite well. According to Lewis he would never play it better.

"Oh, dear! And shall I never hear it?"

Antonia turned her enchanting wild eyes upon the fair-haired young man, who instantly became pale with admiration.

"I shall be most happy!" he muttered. "Any time—now—if madame is not fatigued."

Madame rewarded him with another of her disturbing smiles and Jacob opened the piano. Lewis and Sebastian wrangled a little over which of them was to play, but Lewis prevailed because he said firmly that he knew this piece.

It was surprising music; Florence, for a time, could not help listening in spite of her troubles. But it was Lewis rather than Stavgröd who claimed her attention. He did not often play the piano and she had never heard a performance like this from him before. He certainly knew the piece. There were peculiar passion and sadness in it which plucked at her very heartstrings, as though she was herself an instrument for his cruel, clever fingers. And he gave her besides a conviction of restrained power; she felt that he had mastered all emotion and turned it to his own ends. It was outrageous that he could do it. She knew him to be hard, lustful, and unstable; he had no business to command so much effortless beauty. Playing like this required noble thoughts and unflinching aims. But then, this was his real life.

And it was so with all of them. She watched them as they listened; even old Rachel, gross and ugly though she was, had a strange light on her face as she leaned against the door, smiling and watching the violinist. Teresa and Sebastian were fixed and intent. Jacob had forgotten wife and child, had turned away from them and was staring through the room, all dim with smoke, as though he could see some lost vision beyond the window among the dark

trees of the garden. And Tony, though she pressed her baby in her arms, had wandered in her mind elsewhere. Her lovely eyes had an inward, brooding look. Music, with all these people, came first; that was why they talked about it as if nobody else had any right to it. Once Florence had liked them all too well; now that she understood them better she was frightened of them. She wanted to challenge them, to make a demonstration of her power, to call them back to that world of necessity and compromise which they so sublimely ignored, but with which they would have ultimately to reckon. After all, she was the strongest. She had order and power on her side. They were nothing but a pack of rebels. But she must do something immediate that would prove her strength over them. When the music was finished she rose to her feet, and it was as if they had all grasped something of her emotion. They were silent and watched her curiously as she made her farewells to Antonia. Only Lewis, on the piano stool, kept his back turned to her and went on strumming softly. But she knew that he was listening.

"Good-by, Tony," she said. "I'll bring Teresa around to see you again before she goes. She's our next departure, you know. She's going to school at Harrogate the day after Lewis' concert."

This was the earliest day that Teresa could possibly go. Florence finished buttoning up her gloves while her bomb took effect. Teresa turned very pale but made no protest. Lewis stopped playing, swung round on the piano stool, and asked his wife:

"Is she really going so soon?"

His look disturbed her, but she managed to reply firmly:

"As soon as I can get her off."

"When did you settle it?" he asked very low.

"Just now," she answered, meeting his glance.

"She always speaks the truth," he said, turning to Teresa with a grin.

He got up and came into the hall with them. He took down his hat and Florence asked in surprise if he meant to come back to Chiswick.

"To the Silver Sty," he said. "Yes; I've no time to lose."

## CHAPTER XXI.

The young Sangers could never quite accustom themselves to the immense importance attached to concerts at Strand-on-the-Green. This was because they had, as yet, hardly learned the difference between private and public life; the transitions between the two had been, in the old days, much less abrupt. They had been used to live, as it were, without reticences, transferring themselves noisily from the racket of their home to the racket of the opera house without an appreciable change of atmosphere. There had been none of these secret toilets and preparations, these studied issuings forth into the larger world.

Their cousin, on the other hand, possessed a special concert-room demeanor — a still, serious, attentive carriage which sometimes, on special occasions, showed itself quite early in the day, as though she were practicing inwardly. Traces of it were apparent for a whole week before the performance of the Dodd symphony, which was, of course, the most important thing that had ever happened. An extreme solemnity hung over the actual day, a suspense which damped even the hardened flippancy of Teresa and Sebastian; they went off of their own accord, at an early hour in the evening, to wash their faces and put on their best clothes, a business to which they generally required to be driven.

Florence had told Teresa to put on

her new white frock. It was a maidly garment of embroidered muslin with sleeves to cover her sharp elbows and a high yoke which hid the hollows in her young neck. A white ribbon spanned the broad middle of the dress in that region where it was to be hoped she might some day have a waist, and other white bows tied up her tail of fair hair. Also she had new patent-leather shoes, with steel buckles, and thick, black-silk stockings. All this gear was designed for school parties and concerts, and became her almost as little as it would have become that Delphic Sibyl whom she so closely resembled. Its infantile scantiness emphasized everything that was out of scale in her person: the lanky awkwardness of her rapid growth, and the shy, abrupt grandeur of some of her gestures. She peered at the glass rather dismally and could not help feeling that she looked foolish.

"God in His wisdom gave you that face," she informed her reflection, "and Florence in her wisdom gave you that dress. But they don't understand the value of teamwork. And neither of them consulted your feelings very much. It's not your beauty, my girl, that will get you into trouble in this world."

She had reached a pitch of wretchedness when all evils looked very much alike. Her detestable clothes, the forlorn certainty of school before her, the effort of decision behind her, the loss of her home, the separation from the people she loved and understood, the reverberation of that terror and bewildered shock which had haunted her ever since the night of Sanger's death, all these oppressed her with an equal weight. To thrust her love out of her heart and life had been so monstrous, so unnatural an effort, that all vital feelings had gone with it. The impulse of protest had died; she had no wishes left and felt, with an odd, surprised relief,

that it would be quite easy in future to do what she was told and go where she was bidden. Desiring nothing, she was afraid of nothing save the bodily pain which so often assailed her. To endure this without complaint was now her chief care, for, though its onslaughts were appalling to her mind, she could not bear to think that anybody should know. Illness of any kind was, in her eyes, a little shameful; in Sanger's circus it had never been tolerated, and Kate was the only person there who sympathized with aches and pains. This illness especially, this unsparing enemy that took such complete possession of her, that conquered her spirit and turned her into nothing but a tortured body, seemed base to Teresa, as though there was something indecent in the ugliness of such a contest. She tried never to think of it, but she could not help being rather frightened when she thought of school where she would be running about all day. Really, nowadays, when she had to run, she felt almost ready to die.

Two buttons at the back of her dress proved to be beyond her management, and she did not like holding her arms up, so she went downstairs to demand aid. In her cousin's room she found Lewis with all his red hair standing on end, submitting to a toilet. He was to leave the house before the rest of them, but it seemed likely that he would not be dispatched in time. He had been got into his boiled shirt and was standing, palpitating but patient, while his wife dealt with his tie. Both were looking distraught but on betters terms than they had been for months. The excitement of the moment was such that they had no time to think of their grievances.

In moments of animation Florence always appeared to advantage. Her fine silver dress, with a brilliant Chinese shawl, was flung on the bed, and she was running about in a little silk petticoat, a narrow sheath for her slender,

supple beauty. Her hair, tossed back from her face, hung all soft and cloudy over her white arms and shoulders. Self-forgetfulness was, in her, as rare as it was delightful; both her companions were conscious of its charm. They stared at her in dumb but uncontrolled admiration, moved to that immediate pleasure in beauty which was the strongest impulse in their natures. Lewis, especially, could not take his eyes away from her; he was nervous and preoccupied, secretly dreading the night's work before him, shrinking from the effort, and she was like a reassurance, a solacing repose. There was a sort of dim gratitude in the looks which he cast at her. Teresa saw that he was half bewitched again and wondered if another period of reconciliation was due. She gauged in her mind the command over his senses which Florence so palpably possessed, and balanced against it the inevitable rebellious reaction in him, the rancor, the protest against domination, which had made the history of these two so stormy. She thought:

"Does she want him back? She could get him for a little while, when he's resting after the concert."

She felt no personal concern in the idea that they should come together again; such thoughts would trouble her little in the careful, safe grave she was digging for herself. It was not in her disposition to be jealous of her cousin's beauty; she could never grudge a quality which so enriched the world. Nor was she afraid, now, of any failure in her own resolution, since she would not see Lewis again. He was not coming back to Chiswick after the concert; he would sleep that night in town and next day he was going abroad. He said that he did not know where he was going and the implication that he would not, at any rate, come back had been perfectly understood by the whole household. Florence had seemed to acqui-

esce. Nobody seriously believed that she was going to join him later, and this sudden tender cordiality was, therefore, very puzzling to Teresa, who could discover no cause for it. On no grounds could she explain the generosity with which Lewis, in spite of his amazing faults, was always treated, unless as an exhibition of that forgiving quality which she had once described to Charles as *bonté*, the persistent, noble benevolence which she firmly believed her cousin to possess.

"There you are," said Florence, finishing the tie. "Flatten down your hair and make yourself neat. What do you want, Teresa?"

"My frock."

"Can you really not fasten your own frock? Come here."

"Is this neat?" asked Lewis, after dealing with the brush that had been given to him.

"Passably," said his wife.

"You look like a calf going garlanded to the sacrifice," Teresa told him.

Immediately she was sorry she had said it. It was a great deal too true. He did have very much the look of a dumb beast driven to the shambles, and all this festal preparation only made it worse. She exclaimed encouragingly:

"It'll be over quite soon, you know."

"Very soon," he agreed, with an unamiable expression. "Where shall we all be this time to-morrow? You'll be saying the multiplication table along with the other young ladies, Tessa. And I shall be—God knows where!"

This was not quite true as Teresa knew where. He had told her privately that he was going, by the early boat, to Brussels, in case she might feel disposed to slip out of the house next morning and join him; a communication which she had received with that mute obstinacy, that sulky demeanor of resolution, which was her last line of defense. But she did not point out his

inaccuracy. She saw that the allusion to the garlanded calf had stung him, and she felt that he was perhaps justified in giving her an unkind reply. She merely made a noise of melancholy assent and retreated in good order. It was not until she had shut the door behind her and Lewis was halfway into his coat that the truth flashed across his mind. His wits that night were not at their best. He could hardly believe that he had said good-by to her, that an incredible, impossible thing had really happened, that they would never speak to one another again. For a few seconds he stood petrified; then he turned to Florence and said:

"I shan't see Tessa any more!"

"No," she said easily. "Except, of course, across the Regent's Hall. You can give us a special bow if you like. You—you won't be seeing me again, either, you know."

She glanced at him sideways. He was wrapped in thought and replied absently:

"No, I suppose not."

He wanted to tell her about it; she had been so nice all day. He was seized with a strong, sudden impulse to deal openly with her, to lay the whole truth before her, and to trust that the truth might mend matters. The truth, to him, was the story of Tessa's goodness, her sweet, stanch loyalty. There had been some baseness and enmity between the three of them, but none of it had touched Tessa, and he scarcely believed that it could live if it was brought into the light. He was going away. He had to leave his love behind him. It seemed to him that he might endure that if Florence would but comprehend her. He turned round and said to her, with a new, grave friendliness:

"I wish that you would be better friends with Tessa—that you would love her. She deserves to be loved. Everybody must, I think, that really knows her. If you could hear how she speaks

of you, how she admires you, you—you couldn't help it. I don't think you quite understand how—how good she is."

"No, I don't quite understand," she said, with a bitterness which, in his eager appeal, he failed to remark.

"I can't bear to go away and leave her with people who don't know that," he said simply. "Do try, Florence! I know I'm a bad advocate. I know I've behaved very badly to you. This has been a wretched business and it's best that I should go away, for I've only made you unhappy, and I should go on making you unhappy. But I feel that the worst thing I've done is that somehow I've put you and Tessa against each other. Because you ought to love each other. My fault, that is! I've not spoken plainly. You see—I love her so much—so much! I want to know that she'll be happy. And now I have to leave her with you and you treat her as if she was an enemy. She's not. What can I say? You are so much better fitted to love each other, you two, than I am to have anything to do with either of you. Oh, Florence, can't you see it? If you'd only see it, I could go away and say God bless you both."

She had not thought it possible that he could speak like this. In all their life together she had never heard these tones in his voice, or met that look of unreserved appeal save once in the Tyrol, when he first spoke to her of the little girls, and begged her to take them to England. She had loved him from that hour. And now she knew that it was all for Teresa, the gentleness which she had divined in him then. She had given her heart to Teresa's lover.

"Since when have you loved her so terribly?" she asked.

He didn't know. Always, he supposed.

"Why, then, did you marry me?"

"I was a fool. Oh, Florence, be angry with me, not with her! She's done nothing to deserve it. She loves you."

"Have you told her? Does she know?"

"Yes, she knows. And you knew it, too, didn't you? Didn't you? You've known it for a long time. That's why I'm speaking of it now, because you know it already, and you're a person one can dare to speak the truth to. And you were angry because I didn't tell it, weren't you? You thought you deserved straighter dealing. And now you see that it isn't her fault. You're too generous to do anything else."

She would not look at him. Instead, she looked at her watch, and said that it was time for him to go. But the crazy fellow would not go; he still pleaded, hoping absurdly that this appeal might somehow make things easier for Tessa.

"Florence, don't put me off like this. Can't you see——"

"I can see no good in discussing this business now."

"If I could make you understand what she is really like!" he cried sparingly. "I think she never could have a vile thought about anybody. She couldn't do a base thing. She——"

At that she cut him short, flinging at him abruptly the question which for weeks had tormented her, returning to her mind as often as she banished it. It burst from her.

"You may as well tell the whole truth now. What, exactly, has there been between you?"

"I've told you. I love her."

"And what does that mean? Is she your mistress?"

Though she would not look at him, she could feel the shock of his sudden anger. But he tried to control himself.

"No, she's not. I tell you, she'll have nothing to do with me because she loves you."

"I don't believe you."

"It's true. She would never be as unjust to you."

"What am I to believe? I've seen

enough of the whole pack of you to know that you can't be trusted."

She went across to the dressing table and began rapidly to pin up her hair. Glancing furtively into the glass she was surprised to see that this mortal wound had, as yet, written no history on her face. Only her eyes had an alarmed look. She said to herself that it was too soon. Lewis, watching her, was passing rapidly to a pitch of extreme fury, baffled by his helplessness and the necessity of leaving his friend in the power of a woman who hated and maligned her.

"Supposing you were right," he said, "what would you have done?"

"I should never forgive you."

"Her, you mean. But you won't forgive her now, when I swear she's done you no wrong; you're making a wicked mistake."

"There's no question of forgiveness where she is concerned. I have no very strong feelings about her; I think she's too—too contemptible. She's no better than Tony. This sort of thing was bound to occur sooner or later, I suppose. And it happened to be you, because you haven't the decency to respect your wife's house. I should have foreseen it. No, it's you I shall never forgive."

"Oh, yes, you would, my dear! You'd forgive me anything."

He said this with as much insolence as he could muster, only desiring to punish her for speaking so ill of Tessa. He flung in her teeth the numberless occasions when she had allowed him to cajole her into submission and forgiveness. And when she would not turn round he crossed the room and seized her by the shoulders, wrenching her round and whispering:

"Always ready to forgive me, you've been! Always so generous! Tessa thinks you're an angel. She doesn't know how easy you are to manage."

"Never—after this—never again!"

"Oh, yes! As often as I like. You would! You would!"

"I hate you!"

"Women like you are fond of saying that. It means nothing."

"I pray to God I may never see you again!"

"I've heard that before, too."

"Is this how you treat her? I hope it is. I hope you make her suffer as I do."

"Oh, no!"

He flung her away from him and repeated:

"Not at all. It would be impossible for her to suffer as you do. She has some pride. And then she's not like any of the rest of you. If I tried my fascinating ways on her, she'd give me a black eye!"

And he took himself off.

Florence stood where he had left her. She hardly moved until, a few minutes later, she heard the front door clap after him and the sound of his footsteps hurrying away down the river path. Then, with a kind of hasty, mechanical precision, she finished doing her hair and put on her dress. One clear thought remained in her mind. She must hold herself undefeated until the concert was over; for to-night she must pretend that nothing was amiss. And to-morrow she would go back to Cambridge, to her father, and never so much as think of Lewis again. And she would tell her father the truth about this betrayal, so that Teresa's evil name might never be spoken to her.

Nothing in her life, not even her love, had been so absorbing and powerful as was this hatred for her cousin. She was glad to be so angry. At last she had a justification for the gathering suspicion and resentment of months. Passion held her together under the shock which had snapped her life in two. It gave coherence to her thoughts and enabled her to master herself sufficiently for the business of the evening. Of

Lewis and the atrocious things he had said she would not allow herself to think; it was enough to know that Teresa was responsible for it all.

She was almost calm again when a knock at the door startled her. Sebastian stood there, remarkably respectable in a new Eton jacket, demanding smelling salts or sal volatile.

"What for? Are you ill?"

"Tessa is."

"What's the matter with her?"

"I don't know. She's lying on her bed. She looks very funny."

"Oh, indeed! Then she had better not come to the concert."

They went upstairs to Teresa's room and found her sitting on her bed, wiping the sweat from her face, in a spasm of nervous sobbing. Her pain had been bad for a little time after she heard Lewis leave the house, but she was better now and declared that nothing was the matter. Florence became very stern and efficient, administered sal volatile, dismissed Sebastian, and said firmly:

"You had better not come to the concert if you feel like this, Teresa. Did you have those palpitations?"

"I'm quite well, really."

"Still, one can't have these ways. If you stay quietly at home to-night, you'll know how to control yourself another time perhaps."

"There won't be another time. I'm coming, Florence."

"I shall not take you."

"Then I shall go by myself. You can't stop me. I have money. I shall go the minute you've left the house."

"Oh, very well. There won't be, as you say, another time. You can't disgrace yourself more than you've done already."

"What do you mean?" asked Teresa mildly.

Florence hesitated, but her feelings got the better of her. She must speak, even though she might be sorry after-

ward. She explained in a dry, gentle voice:

"Because I've never spoken of it, you don't think I haven't seen—what's been going on all these months? I've seen it, and I've tried to ignore it, because it was so—so odious. I've tried to make excuses to myself; to tell myself that you are too young to know what you are doing. I'd meant to say nothing of it. I knew you'd learn to be ashamed when you are older. But—"

"Ashamed?"

Teresa was really astonished. If Florence knew all, it was natural that she should be annoyed, but nobody, surely, need be ashamed of themselves.

"Yes! Ashamed! Because I'm ashamed for you. And now I feel that it's only fair that you should know one or two things before you go away. So I'll speak now, and then we'll never mention this again. Teresa, you must know that among decent people a woman who openly pursues a man is considered to have lost all her dignity and self-respect. She's despised and degraded and condemned by everybody. Especially when it is a man who doesn't particularly care for her. I can't—I can't tell you how contemptible she makes herself. And to see quite a young girl doing it is horrible."

"Yes, but what has that to do with me? I haven't been pursuing a man that doesn't particularly care for me. It's a mug's game; I agree with you."

"You know perfectly well that you have. It's been almost impossible for me to say anything, since the man has been my husband; but now that he has gone, now that you will not see him ever, ever again, I can say it. You've thrust yourself upon him. You've thrown yourself at his head in a perfectly uncontrolled way. It's been quite obvious to every one."

"I love him. I always have. And perhaps anybody could see it. But it's not true, what you said."

"It's quite true. He's spoken of it to me himself."

"He? Oh, no! You must have made a mistake, Florence. He would never—"

"It's odious, as I've said before, to have to take you to task for your manner to my husband, but for your own sake—"

"I'm afraid I must take you to task for your manner to me. I don't think you mean it, really, Florence! But I will not have these things said to me. It's not my fault that I love him. I did, long ago, before you came to the Tyrol. It isn't a happy thing at all; it's brought nothing but sadness to me. Only it has been so much all of my life that I couldn't want it to be different, any more than I could want to be changed into another person. And I've come to see, since I've been here, that we can't all be together, now that he is your husband. That's why I agreed to go to school. I wouldn't otherwise. You know I said at first that I wouldn't. But ever since I saw that I ought to go, I've said not a word against it, now have I? All these weeks! I wanted to write to Uncle Charles often, to get him to let me off. But I never did."

"You'd better not write to him. I shall have to tell him how difficult all this has been, and then he'll see, as I do, that you are better at school."

"If you tell him untrue things about me, I shall tell him the truth myself."

"Which of us do you think he'll believe?"

Teresa was silent. She was becoming frightened of Florence. Yet she was accustomed to associate anger with hard words and violence, and she could hardly believe that deadly insults are sometimes spoken gently. Florence, so lovely and dignified, could not really hate her, could not really mean to deny her the right to love and to suffer. This controlled animosity was some-

thing quite new, and it alarmed her terribly. She said, backing away:

"You are making a mistake. You don't mean these things. Something funny must have happened. What's the matter?"

But Florence would not stop. She went on, low voiced and relentless:

"You speak of love! What can you know of it? I wonder that you dare. When you are older perhaps you'll be ashamed!"

"I know all about it," interrupted Teresa somberly.

"What do you mean by that?"

The question was rapped out with a rising shrillness, and Teresa exclaimed in a panic:

"What's the matter with you? Florence! Don't! Don't look at me like that! Don't speak like that! I've done you no harm. What did you think I'd done?"

Before her eyes the woman was turning into a Medusa; she shut them, to escape from that stony, vindictive head, thrust close into her face. She felt her shoulder grasped and the hard, hoarse voice whispered again into her ear:

"Tell me what you mean."

"Don't! I won't." She sobbed and struggled. "Let me go!"

With a scream of terror she got herself free and ran from the room and downstairs and out of the house. Florence, left alone in the little bedroom, drew a long breath of relief. In five minutes the accumulated venom of many months had found a vent. She was glad now, though she was aware that she might repent later. She was triumphant. It was even satisfying to know that she had hurled a rank name after her flying enemy. To-morrow she would probably blush to think that she could have screamed such a word out through the house, but filthy language was the only sort of speech which the Sangers understood.

"Thank goodness! I've put the fear of God into her!" she thought. "She deserved every word of it. How frightened she looked and how shocked! One would think she'd never heard anybody swear before. But I suppose it must have been rather a shock to hear me swearing!"

The first chill of doubt fell upon her exaltation, and she hurried off, back to her room, to put on her shawl.

Teresa was, indeed, nearly shocked to death. Her fear was like a nightmare, she did not know where to turn or how to protect herself from this horrible woman who looked like an angel and talked like a devil. Uncle Charles might prate about the merit of a civilized life, but there was no safety in it. If Florence, who had seemed so beautiful and so good, was really like this, there was no safety in it. Only she could never get away; they had trapped her now. Lewis, the only friend she had in the world, was lost to her. He was gone beyond her reach. He would have taken her and shielded her, and though he might be a little rough sometimes she would always know where she was with him. Besides, she loved him. And yet she had made him go away. She had been mad.

Still gasping with indignation and fright she ran a little way in the dusk along the river path and then, looking furtively around her, came to a standstill. There was nobody on the path and all the houses seemed quiet. A couple of swans paddled lazily over the dim water, up past the island, but otherwise the river, too, was deserted. She could hear the tide, which was almost high, gurgling against the barges moored to the island. She debated with herself the practical difficulties in the way of a quick escape and came to the conclusion that it would be no use to jump off the wooden embankment at

the edge of the path. She would merely stick in the shallow mud. She must go farther down, where it was deeper at the edge. She started back toward the bridge and collided with a person hurrying along to the station.

"Scusa!" said the person.

It was Roberto going to the concert, in his bowler hat, with his going-to-Mass umbrella under his arm. He always took his umbrella to concerts in the old days. She must get back there somehow. She must get to Lewis.

"It's you, is it?" she said. "You'll be the last person to speak to the deceased. I hope they won't hang you for murdering me, Roberto. They might do anything in this country."

"Scusa!"

"Remember me, but—ah, forget my fate!" she said impressively.

"Subito!" said Roberto obligingly.

He said this when injunctions were laid upon him which he did not understand; it testified to his willingness. Teresa laughed. She knew that she could not possibly jump into the river. There was still too much to laugh at. She would go to Lewis and they would get away from it all. She asked Roberto if he had pencil and paper. He had, and she scrawled a message to Lewis telling him that she would meet him by the early boat train to-morrow. This note was to be given into his very hands, as she impressed upon Roberto in two languages.

"Take it into the artists' room," she insisted. "You must get there somehow."

"Subito!"

Roberto had spent most of his life in artists' rooms and had no doubt of his capacity to get there. He trotted off down the river path. Teresa sauntered back to the house, kicking little pebbles sideways into the water as Lewis was apt to do. They had many identical gestures.

## CHAPTER XXII.

Their places were in the first circle, well at the side and almost above the orchestra so that they had a good view of the house. Sebastian and Teresa, having wrangled a little over the best seat, devoted themselves to a scrutiny of the packed masses in the gallery in order to discover Roberto. They waved excitedly when they found him. Florence looked down at the arena below her, and observed the sort of people who were coming in, and was confirmed in her estimation of the evening's importance. Whatever Millicent might say, they were coming. She saw friends who never went to concerts unless they were important, people who were not even musical but whose opinions were universally respected; all the people who had gone to hear "Prester John," and another choicer group which would not, apparently, listen to Sanger but which was curious about the Dodd symphony. She had got them all, sitting below and around her—all that world which she desired to conquer. The applause and recognition of this audience would, in her eyes, justify to the world her belief that she had married a great man. It would be her defense against Churchill criticism, and now that her life had come so entirely to grief she badly needed a defense.

She nodded to her friends, here and there, in a leisurely way. Her concert-room demeanor was in full force. She held her round, dark head very high over the glowing, lavish folds of her shawl, and she was sparing of any gesture with her hands. She was determined not to be agitated and voluble; she would not twitter as so many women will when their men are on trial before the world. To be serene, assured, beautiful, that was her part of the business, and if she had not always managed it in the past, it was because she had been forced to appear in public

with a train of strident young Sangers. In future—but there would be no future, Lewis had passed all permissible bounds, and they were to part. But she must forget that until after the concert. The orchestra was trickling in.

The chi'dren, hanging over the edge of the balcony, were exchanging salutations with a few odd-looking acquaintances.

Old Sir Bartlemy Pugh, having seen them from the opposite side of the house, came round to speak to her. She was glad, for she had caught sight of Millicent coming in with Lewis' father, who was looking more than ever like a civic portrait. Both he and his daughter were staring up at her companion with interest, nor were they the only people in the Regent's Hall who would notice that the old gentleman had hobbled all the way round the first 'circle to make himself agreeable to young Mrs. Dodd. She talked calmly and without undue animation, but a little flush of pleasure glowed in her cheeks.

"All the world and his wife seem to be here," said Sir Bartlemy. "It's a long time since I dragged my gouty limbs to an affair like this. And I hear that they've put the symphony after Jansen's horrid little bit of work. I needn't have hurried over my dinner. I've a good mind to go home and finish my coffee!"

"But I'm most anxious to hear the 'Turkish Suite,'" declared Florence, who was secretly delighted at the intimacy of these remarks.

Very seldom did Sir Bartlemy permit himself to speak slightlying of a contemporary, and then only in the company of close friends. She had never heard him call anything horrid before; she felt that she had graduated in his friendship.

"Mawkish! Mawkish!" he complained, shaking his head. "'Turkish Delight,' we call it, down at Greenwich.

How are you, Dawson? Do you realize we are in for the 'Turkish Suite?'"

Doctor Dawson was making his way to a seat behind Florence. He was accompanied by a group of pale young women, members of his celebrated choir, who escorted him everywhere. One of them carried a railway rug to wrap round his knees if he found the Regent's Hall drafty. He grinned at Sir Bartlemy and scowled sideways at Florence with a hasty:

"How are you? I've just been round back there, and Lewis is here all right. I congratulate you, ma'am, on producing him at the right hall on the right evening. It takes a clever wife to do that. It was a good idea sending him here in charge of the butler."

"The butler?" said Florence, a little puzzled.

"Your Italian fellow. He seemed to be chaperoning Lewis when first I went in down there. I don't know where he disappeared to."

"Roberto?" Florence gasped. "I didn't send him. Are you sure? He's up in the gallery."

"Quite sure. Have you met Baines?"

And he introduced her to a little old man who had come in with him, an almost legendary person who had trained more great singers than any three men of his generation. He was now so ancient that most people thought he must be dead. He lived at Wimbledon, took a few pupils to amuse himself, and turned up once a year at the opera in order to remind the world that he was still alive. Hardly ever did he attend a concert and his appearance for the Dodd symphony was unexpected and sensational.

He twinkled at Florence a rheumy eye which had ogled four generations of pretty women and talked away to her, in a high cackle, above the confused din of the tuning orchestra, the booms of double basses beneath, and the short, sudden brays of clarinets.

He told her that he had met Lewis in Vienna, ten years before, at a supper given by Sanger.

"We have Sanger's circus with us still," exclaimed Doctor Dawson. "This is one."

He stretched an arm, caught Sebastian by the back of his jacket, and turned him round. Branwell Baines looked a little surprised at such cleanliness and order, and commented:

"Well, well, I wouldn't have guessed it! I was sorry to miss 'Prester John,' Mrs. Dodd, but I'm getting on, you know, and I don't go about very much. Saving your presence, I had a little chill on the liver, and these east winds——"

Here there was a great outcry from the children that Ike and Tony had come and was it not very soon for Tony to be out? Florence and her three cavaliers turned to look downward, and saw that eight out of every ten people were glancing curiously their way. Antonia, still a little frail but regal, in black velvet with the most amazing pearls, was leaning upon Jacob's arm, receiving the compliments and obvious congratulations of a number of Semitic-looking gentlemen, who most of them found it necessary to kiss her hand. She looked up to where Florence was sitting between Sir Bartlemy and Branwell Baines, with Dawson leaning over the back of her chair, and waved gayly. Florence smiled serenely back and bowed to Mrs. Leyburn and a good many other people.

The lovely ladies who were to play the harp in Jansen's "Turkish Suite" were proceeding to their lone post in front of all the forest of music stands and shirt fronts. The noise of tuning was beginning to subside and Sir Bartlemy, with a hasty farewell, ambled back to his seat on the far side of the circle. Florence, settling herself and her trappings comfortably into her seat, felt that Teresa, beside her, had

stiffened and was sitting bolt upright. She looked down and saw that Lewis was making his way up onto the platform. There was a little applause, not very much, not enough to call for acknowledgment, and he took no notice of it. A moment later he had mounted the *estrade*, and his back was turned upon them all. He tapped on the rail and the hum of the hall behind him sank to a rustle. The rustle was silence.

Music stole out like a mist into the great spaces of the building. It hung in the air in front of Florence, an almost visible fabric, a flowing pattern of strings cut through by the sharp notes of horns, blurring the piled tiers of faces which went up, and up, to the dark, high gallery. Down below, the orchestra was a checkered tapestry of black and white, across which the slender white bows moved all together. Only Lewis stood out clearly, and Florence discovered how very well shaped his head was, when seen from the back, a thing which had been long known to Teresa. Standing thus, he looked a different man altogether. She examined him curiously through the pleasant measures of the "Turkish Suite," which seemed nice music, if a trifle saccharine. His carriage as a conductor pleased her enormously, but she wished that she could see his face. He was very still and there was, to her eyes, almost too much gravity in his pose, considering the work in hand. The orchestra, sweating their way through the Caucasian dances of the second movement, must be finding some source of energy in his expression, for he did almost nothing, and his immobility contrasted strangely with their manifest toil. Then, as a crescendo swelled on a faint quiver of his baton, she wondered what sort of a noise would be heard if he should take it into his head to exert himself. The "Symphony in Three Keys" had plenty of noise in it. She began to get excited.

The thing was over unexpectedly soon and the applause was considerable. Florence found herself a little enthusiastic; it was better music than she had thought. More people were coming in. The clapping went on. Lewis, pale, wild, and unconcerned, came back and bowed unsmilingly to the gangway between the stalls. The clapping went on. They wanted Jimmy Jansen. He came and bowed energetically to everybody, but he did not look very pleased. Doctor Dawson leaned across his railway rug, and poked Florence in the back, and whispered:

"Good man! Jansen wrote that last *allegro ma non troppo*, and he took it *presto*. 'Pon my word, it's a vast improvement!"

"I expect he thought he'd written it himself," said Teresa with a little chuckle. "It's a mistake he often makes when he's conducting a piece. He stops and says, 'Now why did I do that?'"

"That's nonsense," said Florence coldly.

She had almost succeeded in forgetting Teresa, and it was necessary that she should. To be married to a man like Lewis was not easy; there would be, always, so much to forget. But she did not think that anything in the future would be as difficult as this estrangement for which Teresa was responsible. Almost she felt that she could not pardon it; it was too outrageous. The scene to-night must have ended it. Only that they were all like that; some of them were much worse. Sanger used to beat his wives. Lewis never did that.

All these thoughts were flashing through Florence's mind as she told Doctor Dawson that she had liked the "Turkish Suite."

"Very noble, he made it sound," agreed Doctor Dawson. "It's a trick he has."

She remembered how he had played

the Kreutzer. It was certainly a trick he had, if nobility, grandeur of interpretation can be called a trick. Her mind roved over their life together, as she tried to decipher in the man she knew the features of the artist thus revealed. He displayed, as a musician, a largeness of spirit which she had never divined in the man. She confided to Doctor Dawson that she had never known that he was so good a conductor.

"Very few of us knew," was his reply.

He was with them again, looking different, looking more collected, mounting the *estrade* with a sort of brisk determination which took her by surprise. The silence, under his lifted baton, was complete and sudden like the flash before a thunderclap, a soundless shock, a pause. The baton fell and the lordly racket of his symphony was let loose on them. An astonishing pandemonium it was, written at a time when Sanger dominated all his ideas, yet with a shape and contour which passed perpetually beyond the purely revolutionary formula invented by his master. Its long, striding intervals, its violent rhythms, fell upon the ear, at first, like an outrage, and Florence felt, as she had always felt when she heard this symphony, that her powers of criticism were failing her. She was helpless under the force of ideas stronger than her own; her musical idiom, generally so crystal clear, was losing shape, growing dim, crumbling. She was transported into a region of wide spaces, formless ether, mist and the flames of lost stars, where the imagination, suddenly enlarged, grasped ultimately the idea of order, the slow procession of the glittering worlds weaving a pattern in the void.

"I wasn't mistaken," she thought. "It's wonderful. He's a great man. I don't care what any one else thinks."

She looked down and watched him, as he directed this uncharted storm

which he had willed, his baton darting and flickering in a great wind of sound, his red hair pushed away up onto the top of his head. Then she looked at the hall and saw no more planets, but Jacob and Antonia listening with their mouths open. Tony did not like it; she hated loud noises and the drums, of which Lewis was making lavish use, frightened her as much as a thunder-storm. Jacob was patting her hand to soothe her. Jimmy Jansen and the critics, just behind, were grinning broadly. Florence scanned more faces anxiously; a good many people looked amused. She found herself growing resentful of their impenetrable stupidity; she could better forgive those who looked horrified. Then she fell to listening again, wholly lost in the delight of the second movement and its theme for strings. The drums had died away; they could just be heard, the faintest heartbeat, through the dying cadences of 'cellos and violas. Clarinets and horns were silent. Lewis, having bludgeoned his audience into submission, having broken down their powers of resistance, that defense against dangerous beauty which the sane mind will preserve, was prepared to play them a tune. He could do what he liked, now, with those who had accepted his art. And even to those who did not, his theme was beautiful, for he could, for all his self-denying, write those inevitable tunes of which there are so few in the world. This interlude, heightened to a supreme simplicity by contrast with the din which had gone first, was so short as to be little more than a reprieve, an illustration of the peculiar effect of melody heard after a shock. It passed, and the beat quickened to the fury of a last movement and a return to Sanger's methods. Teresa and Sebastian, who loved Lewis when he was tuneful and loathed his work with the drums, sighed deeply as the respite ended.

Florence, coming out of her dream, remembered suddenly that she had been upon the point of parting with this man, she could not clearly remember why. But she had actually thought of going back to Cambridge, of allowing him to go away without her. She had nearly lost him, and yet he had been hers. He should be that again. All her charm, all her wisdom should be used to win him back. He was a great musician; he was worthy of all the love and devotion she could give. If he wanted to live abroad, she would go with him. If he was difficult, she would bear with him. If he was cruel, she would steel her heart to endure it. But she would never, never, never let him go.

The storm swept on to its climax, ending with a crash, and Lewis, frantic, distraught, leaped into the air, as though he would dive head first off his little platform into the midst of his perspiring orchestra. The shattered audience pulled itself together and applauded doubtfully. A few enthusiasts shouted a little and somewhere, at the back of the house, there was an attempt at hissing. An atmosphere of disorder hung over the hall, as though it had seen lately some deed of incredible violence. Many people took their departure, and others hurried off to get a drink somewhere. Listening had been thirsty work. Doctor Dawson pulled himself up, handed his railway rug to one of his ladies, and stumped off to bed, snarling, as he passed the benevolent Baines:

"What d'you make of it, hey? Never heard such a filthy hullabaloo in your life, did you?"

But the kind old man merely waved a deprecating, benignant hand, complaining:

"Ah, these young men! These young men! He'll change everything, will he? Why should he? I don't want it changed. And why, when he can write a second movement like that—— But"

—turning to Florence—"I trust I may tell you that his conducting is like nothing that I've ever watched—and I've seen a good deal in my time. The most triumphant—"

The press, next morning, hailed Dodd as a conductor and laughed at his symphony. But Jacob Birnbaum, down in the stalls, was discussing with his friends the details of the next concert with much guttural joviality. It must be very soon, said Jacob.

Lewis, however, never gave another concert in London.

### CHAPTER XXIII.

The train, running over points near Ashford, changed its smooth rhythm for a succession of loud, clanking jerks. Lewis roused from an uncomfortable doze. He opened his eyes at the morning sunlight shining in his face and discovered confusedly that the night was over.

He tried to think. It was one of those bad days when everything is out of gear, and he could not put two ideas together. He was aware of the slowness of mind, the extreme lassitude of spirit, which always overtook him after a concert. He was listening for some coherence in the noise of the train and could find none. The sun in his eyes gave him a headache. He blinked at it angrily.

The person opposite leaned forward and pulled down a blind so that his face was shaded. Looking toward her, in a sort of dumb gratitude, he was not much surprised to discover that it was Tessa. But it took him a little time to remember why she was there and that they were on their way to Dover. He recollects slowly how Roberto had brought him her message, the night before, and how he had nearly missed the train. He had bounded down the platform at the very last moment and she was waiting for him, steadfast but a

little pale, by the barrier. And as they slid clear of the murky station, into the sunlight, he had fallen asleep, only rousing for a second when they crossed the bridge because Tessa opened the window and hung out, taking a last look at London and the glittering river. Now, as far as he could see, they were deep in Kent, rushing southward through a bright, windy morning.

It was lovely to be with her. She was the only person in the world with the wits to draw blinds without being asked. He found his tongue and inquired if she had breakfasted. She shook her head.

"Nor have I," he said. "We'll get something on the boat."

"You can if you like. For me to eat on a boat is simply a waste of good food. I've a queasy stomach."

The other people in the carriage looked at her with a sort of wondering, dull resentment, and Lewis said:

"It's inconsiderate of you to talk in that way. We've all got to go on the boat." Then, vaguely: "Are you ill?"

He hardly knew why he asked this; but she did not look right somehow.

"No. It's all the fuss yesterday, and the concert, and not sleeping, and getting up early, and having no food."

This catalogue of hardship almost reassured him. Perhaps, after all, she did not look so very queer. He told her to wake him up when they got to Dover. Then he shut his eyes, but opened them again a moment later to take another look at her. She had put on, for this expedition, a new serge school suit, very neat and brief, and she had a brown paper parcel by way of luggage. It occurred to him, for the first time, that she might be unhappy and frightened at the step she was taking. He smiled at her and she returned his look a little dimly, like a person a long way off. He tried to think of some very protecting, comfortable thing to say but could only manage to demand

if she was quite all right. She nodded, and he reflected that she ought to know how to look after herself, having been brought up to it. The blessed peace of being with her stole over him again and he drifted off into sleep.

She sat staring out of the window at the long rows of hop poles, spinning like the spokes of a wheel. These had interested her, she remembered, when she came first to England, less than a year before. And now, so unexpectedly soon, she was off again, having learned in this short time a number of things which would be in future of no use to her whatever. She had an idea that, for her peace of mind, she had best forget everything that had happened since Sanger's death. She was going back to the ways of her childhood, not because they seemed admirable to her but because there was no place for her elsewhere.

She was profoundly happy, but a little bewildered at this sudden change in her life. It was such a miracle to find herself alive and with Lewis instead of dead and at school. It seemed to her now as though she had escaped annihilation by the merest chance and she could hardly believe in her recovered safety. Having chosen life instead of death, she was secure forever. She sat very still with her hands folded, watching her friend as he slept. He was all huddled up in his corner, and his face in repose looked young and weary, the harsh lines which scored it in his guarded hours seemed now painful and innocent. She saw that he was tired out, and she felt sorry when they flashed in and out of the chalk cuttings by the sea and she knew that she must wake him.

The morning air at Dover was very cold and her paper parcel, though not large, had grown so heavy that she nearly dropped it as she followed Lewis up the gangplank on to the boat. A chattering crowd pushed her this way

and that and she could see no place where she might sit down and rest herself.

"Oh, dear," she gasped, "I'm so cold! I'm so tired! Couldn't we get a chair or something? There are some men with chairs."

"Those are for the first-class passengers, my dear. Let's walk about a bit and get warm."

She shivered so much that he opened his bag and pulled out his old yellow muffler to wrap round her throat and shoulders. It brought back the old times very suddenly, for in the Tyrol he had worn it on all occasions and she had never seen it since. Florence had suppressed it. It smelled of a good many things, chiefly tobacco. She snuggled into it gratefully and they found a sheltered place where they could watch the great rattling crane which heaved up endless loads of luggage and plunged them into the hold. Teresa thought of all the clothes in all those boxes and looked at her own parcel and felt glad that she had kept so free of possessions during her English sojourn. Even her luster bowl was broken; she was as free as the sea gulls flashing through the sunlight over their heads.

Presently the bell rang and the siren hooted and the long line of porters ran back the gangplanks. The boat drew away from Dover quayside and the blank wall that hides the trains, and the gray-terraced town with its white cliffs, and all the ramparts of the English coast, getting lower and smaller. Teresa waved good-by to it and to Uncle Charles' niece, a shadowy person, the creation of his persuasive fancy, and once, for a short time, almost convincing. It was not a difficult farewell, for the capacities of this dimly apprehended young woman had been so unripe, her destiny had lain so very much in the future, that she might never have come to life. Teresa had lost faith in her.

They had not gone far into the windy

morning before she was compelled to go down into that Limbo where Belgian stewardesses in dubious aprons ply their grim trade. She felt desperately ill, but not so bad that she could not enjoy the antics of her fellow passengers. In an undertone she rehearsed their complaints, announcing her condition in every sort of accent, Glasgow, Kensington, Cambridge, Dublin, Leeds, Wapping, and New York. But before the end of the crossing, which was a bad one, she lost interest in life. Time had ceased to exist for her, when a voice penetrated the chilly fog of exhaustion which shut out the world.

"Mademoiselle is alone? She has no friends?"

Two stewardesses were looking at her in evident anxiety. Their faces floated in the fog above her head. One of them said that she was blue and they asked again if she was alone, this time in French, and very loud, blaring at her like a couple of trombones.

"*Toute seule*," she replied weakly. "Non—un monsieur—là haut. *On arrive déjà!*"

"*Nous sommes en retard. Mademoiselle est vraiment malade? Elle se trouve mieux à présent?*"

"Woirse and woirse!" said Teresa, with a recollection of the lady from New York in the next bunk. If she could survive this crossing she would make Lewis laugh, telling him about all these ladies. She said in a stronger voice that she could do with some brandy if they had any.

They gave her brandy and she found the strength to struggle to her feet. All round her the battered wrecks of women were gathering themselves and their possessions together. She looked in her purse and found half a crown and three halfpence. She gave the half crown to the stewardess and climbed rather uncertainly up the steep ladder. She noticed that the woman stood at

the bottom watching her anxiously as if afraid she might fall back suddenly.

"I must look frightful," she thought.

Outside, the cold air did her good. She found that they were nearly in, slipping past the endless Ostend Plage, with its fringe of hotels and casinos. It was a boisterous, changeable afternoon and the enormous sky seemed to be full of clouds, all sailing at different speeds, speared through with brilliant, watery shafts of sunlight. Behind them was a gray, forbidding waste, already blurred with rain.

A dense crowd was lined up for the gangplanks and she could not see Lewis anywhere. But as they began to stream off the boat, she thought she caught sight of him, well ahead of her, going into the Douane. Thither she followed him and got an official to deal with her parcel, after a long interval of pushing and shouting. She had to untie the string, and as she was doing it up again she was appalled to hear somebody call out that the Brussels train was just starting. Gathering her possessions in her arms, she ran, strewing articles of toilet over the railway lines. Lewis, hanging out of a carriage window, hailed her:

"Here you are! Jump in! I nearly went without you!"

She jumped in, and the train started.

"Your toothbrush is on the line," he said, taking a last look out of the window. "What made you cut it so fine? Were you changing your money?"

"No," she replied, at last getting her breath back. "I didn't like to change such a large amount in a hurry."

She showed him her three halfpence and he laughed.

"You'll have to buy me another toothbrush," she said.

"On the contrary, you must do without one. Many most admirable people do."

She raised her eyebrows and asked sweetly:

"Were you sick on the boat, my turtle-dove?"

He said not, but she scarcely believed him, for he looked very yellow. She was still sustained by the brandy and talked a great deal to the people in their carriage. Lewis was relieved when they reached Brussels.

They walked a little way and then took a tram. Teresa was silent and docile. She sat beside Lewis, as they rumbled along toward a distant suburb, leaning against his shoulder and watching the stormy sunset behind the houses. It was a menacing sky: rags and banners of red cloud hung above the noisy streets and lit the faces of the people with an angry flame. The cries and shouts of the city sounded in her ears like cries of danger, warnings called forth by the wild light. Her dim remembrances of Brussels were not like this. When she had been there as a little girl it had seemed rather dull; this was a town imagined in a dream, a flaming, adventurous place where anything might happen. She looked up at Lewis to see if he, too, found it exciting. He was gazing at the bright sky with the extreme concentration of purpose which he used for all important things; it was the first time that he had looked really awake since they started on their journey. He seemed to be gathering in that noisy radiance and stowing it away in his mind. An idea came to her and she asked:

"Where are we going?"

He removed his light, steady eyes from the fiery clouds and blinked at her, as if trying to remember. Then he said:

"To Madame Marxse. She'll put us up. You remember her? You all stayed in her house once before, didn't you?"

"I think I remember," she said slowly.

...When she was a very little girl Sanger's circus had spent some months with

Madame Marxse. Only she seemed to remember an old woman who was unbelievably fat. Oh, but monstrous! At that age one sees things out of scale.

"Is she fat?" she asked.

"Fat! We call her 'Queen of the Fairies.' You see!"

Teresa remembered now that that was what they did call her. Yes, and she had a bust like a broad shelf, buoyed up by a much-boned corsage; it was with some awe that the young Sangers had watched her eat, so impossible was it that she could see her plate.

"Must we go there?" asked Teresa, rather reluctantly.

"She knows us all," explained Lewis. "She'll—she'll hold her tongue if anybody comes asking for us."

"I see. I've quite forgotten Brussels."

But when they stood on the doorstep of Maison Marxse, she recognized the house opposite which used to have a bird cage with a canary in it. The smell of the entresol—a mixed smell of onions, stale scent, dirty black clothes and dust—carried her back more entirely into childhood. The door shut behind them like a trap and the meager boy who had let them in went shuffling down the passage in front of them. An overpowering odor of the past rose up and clutched at her in the little room where Madame Marxse, larger even than memory had painted her, wheezed upon a sofa amid sacred reliquaries, pampas grass, and cats. It was such a small room, far too small for its occupant; it must have been built round her, for she could never have got in at the door.

Lewis was greeted with a cascade of asthmatic chuckles and many shrill questions. Teresa had time to look about her. She remembered the picture over the stove, a puzzling group of a much-curved nude lady and a swan, which recent study of a classical dictionary enabled her to identify. But in

spite of this piece of information she felt very much like a little girl, as she stood shyly clinging to her lover's hand, while he bargained with *Reine des Fées* for a room. Presently she was pulled forward and introduced. The old woman remembered her, and she was folded in an odious, flabby embrace spiced with a whiff of strong waters. Inquiries were made after the other brothers and sisters. Caryl and Kate? How were they?

"I don't know," said Teresa vaguely. "When Sanger died we were all separated."

Her next thought caused her to tell madame that Tony had a baby. Madame remembered Tony perfectly. A pretty little— And a mother already? Well, well! Teresa, it seemed, had also got a man. The little black eyes leered round at Lewis. Sanger's daughters were not likely to die old maids. Well, well!

"Thou couldst scarcely have begun younger," commented the old woman. "Mother of God! What a hurry the girls are in nowadays! Still, I was no older."

She plunged into reminiscence. Lewis, who had scarcely listened to the conversation, became at last attentive and impatient.

Teresa laughed. She thought Madame Marxse as good as a Shakespeare play at the "Nine Muses," a rich entertainment, better even than the sea-sick ladies. That was because she and Lewis were together; their completeness shut them off from the world. They were like people watching a comedy from a box, seeing more significance in life, savoring its humor more soundly, because in their hearts they were remote.

Madame Marxse had, it appeared, a room for them on the third floor. A fine room with a good bed.

"That will do, I think? If you wish, you may sleep well. But she looks tired,

the *gosse*; tired and pale. Thou hast been ill lately, my child?"

"Only on the boat, madame."

"The boat! Ah! Ah! One understands. Will you go up and see the room? Myself I cannot take you; I never climb these stairs. For five years now I have lived *au rez-de-chaussée*. But my daughter shall take you up. You remember Gabrielle, *petite*? No? Ah, your father would, I think, remember."

She screeched for her daughter, who answered in a deep bellow from the next room and presently joined them, wearing a petticoat and underbodice, protesting angrily that she was just dressing to go out. She was a handsome slattern with small, black eyes, a sallow skin, and a sumptuous figure. Teresa seemed to remember her little mouth, which was almost lost in the ample curves of cheek and chin, but her face which memory recalled was younger, more animated, and framed in cloudy black hair, very different from the short, woolly tufts which hung over Gabrielle's brown neck.

Gabrielle greeted Lewis with a spurt of sudden laughter and a brief warmth in her hard eyes, but she refused to recollect anything about Teresa.

They arrived at their lofty bower quite breathless with giggling. Gabrielle threw open the shutters and flounced out of the room, shouting over her shoulder, before she banged the door, that they must come down soon if they wanted food. It was a small, dingy room with a large, dingy bed in it. Other furniture was hard to find. The strength which had thus far supported Teresa went from her; she sank with a little gasp on the bed, too much exhausted even to take her hat off. Lewis took it off for her, moved to some compunction, and vowing that they should go down directly and get something to eat. Then he began to unpack his bag, strewing things about the room.

Soon there were sheets of music everywhere, and these, with the yellow scarf that hung over the end of the bed, made the place look exactly like every other room which had ever belonged to him. To Teresa it was home; she saw in her mind's eye all the funny rooms which they would share and they were all like this one, half smothered in music, with a pair of boots on the mantelpiece and a big, hard, untidy bed. She wanted to tell him about it but instead she discovered that she had said:

"Lewis—I do feel so very ill."

He looked frightened and then said that it was no wonder. She had fasted for nearly twenty-four hours. She would be quite restored by food and a good night's rest. Urgently he demanded that she should agree with him, which she readily did, surprised at herself for having been so plaintive.

"Though I doubt the night's rest," she said. "I wonder if this is really Old Greymalkin's idea of a good bed."

"Old what?"

"Old Greymalkin; the hag downstairs. She made a point of it that this was such a good bed and everything."

"Did she? Let me feel it! Oh, Teresa, it's not so bad. I've slept on worse."

"Feels to me more like a stone quarry. But this is a very odd place altogether. I'm surprised at you for bringing me here."

Lewis was looking round the room, taking it in. He examined the torn curtains and the flyblown paper and the gas jet and the incongruous ornaments; finally he looked at Teresa, exhausted but intrepid, stretched upon the bed. He clapped his hand to his head in a sort of seizure and announced:

"Call me a fool! We'll go away tomorrow."

"Dear heart! Why? Are we the wandering Jew?"

"Filthy place!"

"It can't hurt us."

"Can't it, my blessing? I'm not so sure. There must be other places."

"I think you'll find they all look pretty much the same."

"I ought to have thought—it took me so much by surprise when you changed your mind like that, at the last minute. I never thought! Tessa!"

"Um?"

"You haven't told me yet, why you did change so suddenly."

"No. And I shan't ever tell you."

"Why not?"

"It isn't—a suitable subject for people to talk about."

"Dear me!"

He was surprised. He could not imagine the subject which would appall Tessa into silence. He came and sat on the bed beside her and said in a low voice:

"Tell me!"

"Blessed if I do."

"Tessa, you must! You must let me have everything—now."

"Not a bit of it. You'll never know; you can keep on guessing till the cows come home, but I won't tell you."

"I don't need to guess. You've got a face like a cinematograph. He who runs may read. I know what it was."

"Bet you don't!"

"Something frightened you."

"Aren't you clever!"

"What was it? I always know when you're frightened; there are two funny little lamps in your eyes, right in the very middle of your eyes, and they light up when you're frightened. I can see them now; you're frightened still. Tessa! Don't hide away from me! Tell me what it is!"

She had twisted herself away from him, and was hiding her telltale face in the pillow. But he could see a deep blush spreading over her cheek and the back of her neck. His astonishment grew. What in the world could ever make her blush?

"Are you ashamed of anything?" he demanded sternly.

A muffled voice bade him leave her alone.

"Well, then, look at me!"

She sat up and looked at him, straightfaced and rather indignant, the pink slowly ebbing from her cheeks. He saw that she had been ashamed, but not for herself. Some one else had been at her. But who? After he had left Chiswick— Oh, it was obvious!

"It was something Florence said," he stated.

"Lewis! Please!"

"Did you have words?"

"I shan't tell you."

"And she made you frightened and ashamed? Why can't you tell me?"

"Because—women oughtn't to—to tell men—about each other."

"I see. Then we'll leave it. But you're an astounding creature, Tessa. You'll listen to Reine's conversation without turning a hair, and yet a genteel person like Florence—"

"Please!"

He laughed. He could quite imagine the sort of thing that Florence had said; it was probably enough to make anybody blush. Whatever it was, he blessed her for it, since it had sent Tessa to him. He went on teasing for a little while, but he did not press the point.

"I don't believe that you really understood half that Reine said," he insisted.

"Perhaps not," she murmured, her cheek against his. "But I know what she thinks. She thinks a funny thing about you and me."

"So does Florence, as a matter of fact."

"Does she?" Tessa sneered away from all thought of Florence. "Well, but, Lewis, I've a hard thing to ask you. If I'm not—what they think—what am I?"

He sat for a long time silent, holding her carefully as though she were some-

thing precious and easily broken. Then he said:

"You mean, what would I call you if I wasn't your lover? That's a tight place! Listen! Will this do? I won't—I couldn't—ever again, in all my life, call any woman by a name that sounded too hard for you. I would think of any woman that she could be to some man, perhaps, what you are to me."

"That sounds all right. Don't look so worried. I only just wanted to know. It's—completely unimportant."

He had lost himself a little, quite carried away by her passion and the fiery intensity of her mind. Almost he believed himself capable of a love like hers. They sat watching the swift fading of daylight in the sky, while sounds of distant traffic floated up from the street to their high, hidden retreat. He discovered at last that she was very cold; her little fingers, locked in his, were icy, and she shivered so often that he again offered to lend her his muffler. He lit the gas, a bare, noisy jet which threw a green light upon the disorder of the room and turned the window panes from sapphire to black. She looked more wan and frail than ever and he exclaimed:

"You look very moldy. Come down to supper."

"I couldn't, really. I don't want anything. I'm too tired."

"Well, then, I'll go down and bring something up."

And he left her, treading lightly from the room and shutting the door behind him with caution. Outside, in the closeness of the dark landing, the evil of the house seemed to pounce upon him and he was faced with the knowledge that he had brought her there. He would take her away. He groped his way downstairs past shut, secret doors, ranging the world in his mind, seeking a suitable shelter for the pair of them. No place offered itself to his imagination. As she had said, all places seemed

so very much alike. Their safety lay only in themselves, and she had no doubts about it. Why should she? But for himself it was different; he had not that constant and unwavering love which would shine like a torch in dark, unfriendly places.

He interviewed Gabrielle and induced her, with some bribery, to prepare and bring up a tray of food. He told her that they would be leaving in the morning. Then he started up again, still wrestling with the problem of the future. What in the world was he to do with her? They had, unfortunately, no friend whom they could consult. Nobody appreciated Tessa, unless it might be that old gentleman, her uncle.

Confronted by the idea of Charles Churchill, Lewis became very thoughtful.

He found Teresa upon her feet, struggling with some labor and difficulty to take off her frock. He sat down and buried his face in his hands, trying to clear his mind, still distracted by the lethargy of thought which had disabled him all day. At last he said:

"Suppose I wrote to your uncle——"

"Uncle Charles? What do you want to write to him for?"

"I don't know."

"I'll send your love when I write, shall I?" she jeered.

"Oh! You'll write, will you?"

"I thought I'd send him a picture post card now and then."

"Well, when you do, tell him——"

"What? Damn these buttons!"

"I must think."

What, indeed, was he to say to Charles? It was more easy to guess what Charles would say to him. And yet Charles was the only person in the world who had a proper value for Tessa.

"It's very stuffy in here," she said suddenly, in a choked little voice.

He told her to open the window. In his mind he had begun a letter to Charles. He was never very good at

writing letters. He could not at all plan one that explained the nature of his passion for Charles' niece—a thing so delicate that words seemed to hurt it, a thing so beautiful that it must somehow be preserved, a thing so strong that nothing in the world could stand in its way.

"I can't open it," said Teresa, who had been tugging at the window. "It's stiff."

"Try at the top," he advised, without looking round.

She stared up at the top, clutching her breast for a moment, where pain was alive and threatening. Then she braced herself for another effort.

Lewis gave it up. There would be no sort of good in writing to Charles. The only result would be a separation; they would come and take her away from him. That was not to be thought of. The alternative was to succumb to Maison Marxse. He wished that Gabrielle would hurry up with that food. Not that he would let her in. This room was Tessa's stronghold. He would go out and fetch the tray in from the landing.

The noise of the flaming gas seemed to have grown very much louder. The room was frighteningly quiet. Teresa had stopped pulling at the window; she had stopped moving. He looked round and saw that she had slipped down onto the floor.

"Have you fainted?" he asked, jumping up.

She made no reply.

He picked her up and put her on the bed. There was no water in the room, but he found a damp sponge among her things and began anxiously to sponge her face in the hope of bringing her round. Her color disturbed him. Presently a beam of consciousness returned to her eyes.

"Light the light!" she whispered.

"It's lighted."

She stared fixedly at the soaring

green flame. He began to think that she could not see it.

"Tessa!" he protested. "Dearest love!"

He went on sponging her face. The hissing of the gas grew so loud that he could hardly be sure that she breathed. And all day she had been cold.

He heard the tray clinking outside and cried to Gabrielle for help. She opened the door with a bump, pushing the tray in front of her. But when she looked at the bed she exclaimed, and came quickly forward. She put the tray on the floor and came to Lewis and took the sponge away from him.

"What's the good of doing that?" she asked in tones of anger and alarm.

He saw, then, that there was no sort of good in it. His heart's treasure was gone; she had eluded finally both his love and his folly. He became, in an instant, so certain of his loss that he gave up the defenseless thing in his arms to the rude, untender handling of Gabrielle; she could do no harm now to the living Tessa. He stood watching while she made a hasty, indignant examination and at last he explained, stupidly:

"She has got away—she's dead."

"That is evident," agreed Gabrielle. "Still, a doctor must be fetched. I will send Paul."

She hurried off and soon there began to be noises of footsteps, the cries of alarmed people, lower in the house.

Lewis, discovering in his turn that the room was very airless, went to open the window. It would not move and he found a wedge at the top. When he had taken this away the sash slid up easily. He stood holding the wedge in his hand, looking at it and thinking, with a kind of slow amazement, that it had killed Tessa.

The night wind blew in, swaying the dusty curtains, and all the sheets of music on the floor went rustling and flapping like fallen leaves. A chill tem-

pest, it blew over the quiet bed, but it could not wake her. She slept on, where they had flung her down among the pillows, silent, undefeated, young.

#### CHAPTER XXIV.

Florence had been forced to seek help from the Birnbaums. She had not meant to tell them of her fears when she hurried round to Lexham Gardens in search of Teresa. But Antonia had exclaimed immediately:

"Tessa gone? *Himmel!* I knew they would."

And Jacob said:

"We must follow them. She shall be brought back."

They took it for granted that Lewis and Teresa were gone together. It seemed to Florence as though the whole family had been awaiting this calamity; they must have known of it all the time. And, though they were kind to her and sorry for her, she could not help a certain distrust of them, for she had an idea that their sympathies were upon the other side.

They were, however, quite obviously distressed and anxious. Teresa, they said, must be pursued and recovered. Jacob was sure that they would have gone to Brussels, and Tony suggested that they might be staying with Reine.

"We always do, when we go to Brussels," she explained.

Jacob, who knew Madame Marxse by reputation, was inclined to agree with her. He said that he would take the early train upon the following day.

"You?" cried Florence in surprise. "Did you think of going?"

"It is better," he said; "unless your father—"

She had not realized that he would take the affair so personally. But he had a good deal of clan feeling. Teresa was Tony's belonging and he was not going to have her lost.

"I must go," said Florence. "I'm responsible."

"I think," he suggested nervously, "that it would be better that I should go. There is no necessity——"

"It's good of you. But she was my charge. I can manage it alone."

"Mrs. Dodd, you must let me come with you. Or your father. But I, perhaps, would be better than he. You do not know these people. You could do nothing with them."

"Reine is an old devil," supplemented Antonia.

Florence did not want him. She loathed the idea of traveling with him. But she saw that she might, indeed, require his help. She really could not present herself at the house of this Madame Marxse, clamoring for her husband. It was horrible. She thanked Jacob and compromised by accepting his escort. He grumbled about it to Antonia afterward, declaring that he could have managed the business and brought Teresa back perfectly well by himself.

"Can't you see," said Antonia, "that she's going after Lewis? She doesn't care in the least what becomes of Tessa. She hates Tessa. But she won't let Lewis go."

"You are wrong," said Jacob positively. "She will leave him after this. She will not, naturally, endure such behavior. This is the end of that affair."

"Not at all; you think she's proud? She isn't a bit. She'll follow him about anywhere. She won't let Tessa have him, even though everybody knows that he loves Tessa and not her."

"Does he love Tessa? I think he loves nobody but himself. I'm afraid to think what will happen to that little girl."

"They're all right," she insisted comfortably. "They love each other—well—like we do."

"I see little safety in that," he said rather grimly. "And we are probably going too late. But it is clear that she

must be brought back. I wish your cousin did not come, too. She frightens me, that woman. She is always so correct; and I—am not always correct, you understand. What a journey we shall have!"

"Poor Florence!"

"Why do you pity her? She should not have married him. She is not very young and it is to be supposed that she knew the world. It is all her own fault."

"She was very kind to us last summer."

"To you perhaps. To me she has never been kind. I am a very wicked man! What, I would ask, does she call Lewis? You are mistaken, Tony. She will never forgive him. She must hate him."

"Perhaps. You can hate a person and want them."

He agreed, with a nervous glance at her, not daring to ask what she meant precisely. Always he lost himself when he made an attempt to explore her deeper mind.

The journey proved no better than he had expected. He did his best to be inoffensive to his companion, but his behavior, when traveling, was too ornate for her taste, and embarrassment did not improve it.

He selected their hotel in Brussels—a large, noisy, expensive place which she detested—and left her there while he went to make inquiries after the fugitives.

She sat waiting for him to come back, in a chilly, magnificent bedroom. Her spirits sank as the moments passed; she became the prey of a kind of despairing lassitude. She wondered, miserably, why she had come. Yesterday she had been strained and anxious to be off; all through the night an implacable, goaded imagination had kept her from sleeping. Now she felt as though nothing mattered.

She took off her hat and veil and

smoothed her hair. Then she fell to pacing the room, up and down, up and down, while the long minutes dragged. At last she flung herself down on a couch by the window and closed her eyes. Immediately there floated before her that vision which had haunted her mind for forty-eight hours—the dim, checkered pattern of an orchestra and the white bows moving through the air all together. The themes of the Dodd symphony had run in her head, madly, through all her other distractions. Now, as she dozed, the music swelled and grew louder, thrilling through her tired brain; the violins took on the sweet, piercing quality of dream sounds; the drums, hammering ominously, frightened her. They grew so loud that she started up. Jacob was knocking at her door, asking if he could speak to her for a moment. She came out, and stood talking to him in the passage.

"Well?" she asked.

He was pale and disordered. Agitation quivered in his large, opulent person and kindly face. He looked past her into the room and asked if he might come in. He said that it was a bad business. She opened the door wider and let him in. Her aversion was so great that she disliked having to do so, despite the unintimate atmosphere of the room.

Once inside he hardly seemed to know what to say. He stood looking at her, tongue-tied and miserable. She asked whether he had found them.

"Yes," he said. "They went to Madame Marxse."

"Did you see them?"

"I saw Lewis. Mrs. Dodd—it is terrible! I hardly know how to tell you—I—she—"

"You mean—"

"She is dead."

He almost shouted it, in the effort to get it said. Florence started away from him, growing very pale, crying out:

"No! Oh, no! Impossible!"

He thought that she would faint, and was relieved, as then he might put an end to a painful interview and summon assistance. But she collected herself and asked, in a low voice:

"When did this happen?"

"Yesterday."

"I can't believe it."

"I know! I know! I could not."

"Yesterday! When? After they got here?"

"I think so."

He gave her such details as he had been able to collect. After the first she showed little agitation and a great anxiety to know everything.

"Where is Lewis?" she said at last.

"Here."

"Here?"

"In the vestibule. Downstairs. I thought that perhaps you might wish to see him. Shall I send him away?"

"No. No, don't do that."

She reflected for a moment and then asked:

"Does he—does he want to see me?"

"I think so. He has sent a telegram for you this morning."

"Telegraphed for me? Why did he do that?"

It appeared that he had sent for her. He had told Jacob that she would take charge of affairs. There were complications; a doctor had not been summoned until too late and there would have to be something in the nature of an inquest. Lewis, utterly bewildered by all the responsibilities thrust upon him, had sent for his wife.

"She's been ill for some time," said Florence thoughtfully. "Growing too fast, you know. And you say the crossing was bad. It could easily be accounted for. Did you see her?"

"No. They had taken her away—to the mortuary, I think."

"But Lewis was there?"

"Yes. He hardly knows what he is

doing. He says that she belongs to you now."

"And he wired for me this morning? Yes!" She tapped her foot pensively. Then she resumed with energy: "He was quite right. My arriving here today will make all the difference. I represent her guardians, if there is any fuss. There's more chance of the thing being hushed up. We could say that they came on ahead. This woman—Madame Marxse—she'll help us out? She'll tell the same story as we do, if we have to invent something to put a good face on it?"

"Reine will swear to anything that keeps her out of trouble with the police," Jacob assured her. "She is half mad with terror. She will be quite easy."

"I'll have to see Lewis," Florence decided. "It's going to be difficult. The whole thing looks so bad. She was under sixteen, you know. The law—"

"It depends on you," said Jacob, staring at her curiously. "It is for you to say whether he persuaded her to leave the protection of her friends."

He broke off. He was amazed and a trifle shocked at her composure. He found himself wishing that she would be a little grieved. She seemed to view the business simply in the light of a threatened disgrace. He saw it like that himself, though he was very sorry for his young sister-in-law; his mind, as he hurried back to the hotel, had been full of uncomfortable possibilities. He had dreaded the scene with Florence, supposing that his shocking news would utterly prostrate her. He had seen himself, the only practical person at hand, dealing with doctors and policemen, and persuading his lofty-minded companion of the necessity for some sort of compromise. But it had seemed so impossible that Reine and Florence could ever be brought to any concerted action. Now, finding it perfectly possible, be-

holding the young woman no less anxious to avoid a scandal than the old one, meeting cold competency where he had expected distress and indignation, he was relieved but not happy.

She asked him if Lewis was likely to be reasonable, and he said in a lugubrious voice that he did not know. Not to any one, not even to Tony, could he have described the impression which Lewis made upon him. If Florence was showing too little sensibility, Lewis, as usual, was showing too much. Jacob, a plain man, was harassed between them. Florence went on speaking in her quiet, dry voice, mentioning steps that must be taken. How could he describe to her that little, untidy room where Teresa had died, and where Lewis had sat all day, after they took her away, in a dazed and timeless trance among the strewn sheets of music? There had been something in that rigid petrification of grief which frightened Jacob. He said to Florence:

"He should not stay at that place."

"Would he come here, do you think?"

"Perhaps. I believe he will do what he is told."

"Well, then, bring him here. We shall have to stay in Brussels, evidently, till this business is settled. I must send for my father. Can you get Lewis a room?"

"Certainly, Mrs. Dodd. Will you see him now?"

She thought not. She did not feel quite prepared, yet, for that interview. But Jacob was to look after him. And his letters! They had better be taken down; they were on the dressing table. Jacob went to pick them up and saw beside them several notices of the Dodd symphony which she had contrived to collect on the preceding day, in spite of its disorganization.

"I suppose he won't have seen those," she said with a slight blush.

"I think not," said Jacob rather

grimly. "He left England less than ten hours later."

"Perhaps you'd better take them down, then," she suggested.

"*Du lieber allmächtiger Gott!*" thought Jacob as he put them in his pocket and left her. "Perhaps I had better not! All women are wonderful, but this one—"

He was not a tactful man and he had a great regard for press notices; but the civility of showing these to Lewis seemed to him, at the moment, hardly well chosen.

Florence, left to herself, was also a little surprised at her own calm detachment.

She wrote to Charles:

You'll think I'm hard, but you must see that I have to be. Try to think of it as I do. Don't be so sorry for her that you forget me. It's not her death but my life that matters. I *cannot* live without him. And I have the future still to think of.

Teresa had had her chance and had lost him. And she had escaped from life so easily. Florence could not, really, even pretend to pity her, just now. To go on living, to be confronted every day with the necessity of thinking, to look forward into the empty years and make plans for them, to build up upon wrecked love a monument of worthy achievement—this seemed to her a much harder thing.

Jacob, going down, found Lewis in the vestibule, waiting, withdrawn in a secret, shocked meditation, while streams of people pushed past him into the hotel restaurant. He looked as if he had been there forever. Jacob tapped him on the shoulder and commanded him, with awkward compassion, to come in and have something to eat. They went into the restaurant, where a band was playing and much food was displayed. Jacob, despite the gravity of the occasion and a real pity for the man beside him, could not help brightening

up a little. He glanced richly round and a table was at once found for them.

"Your wife," he said to Lewis, "is resting. She will see you later."

Lewis looked at him vaguely and nodded.

"All right," he said.

"She thinks that you had better come to this hotel."

Lewis said all right again and added, as an afterthought, that he had no money. He was given to understand that he need not concern himself on that point. Jacob ordered a meal and they began to eat in silence.

Presently Lewis said:

"Sanger never liked him either."

"Who?" asked Jacob, rather startled. "Trigorin."

"Trigorin! Oh, yes! We were speaking of him?"

"No." Lewis frowned and explained, with an effort. "They're playing the ballet music from 'Akbar.'"

"Ach! So they are. And Trigorin did the dances. Yes!"

Both men listened to the vigorous measures which, since Sanger's death, had become so popular. Jacob thought that he should produce "Akbar" at one of his places. He began to estimate in his mind the risk and the probable vogue which was just beginning. He thought of the immense volume of work left by Sanger and still unproduced, and exclaimed:

"That man! His influence, as yet, is scarcely felt. He has left so much behind him that is vital!"

Lewis did not hear. He was thinking of Trigorin and had escaped for a moment into the mountain spring. He was breakfasting with the absurd creature in the little inn at Erfurt. He breathed again the heavenly air as the train panted up through the pine woods; he heard the cow bells in the high pastures. And again he teased Trigorin as they steamed across the lake to the landing stage where Tessa waited. Here the

memory turned to present anguish, for at the end of it, as at the end of every thought, lay the discovery of Tessa dead. He had got there before he had quite done smiling at Trigorin on the boat, and Jacob asked what the joke was.

"I was thinking of our loss," he explained. "Tessa—I mean—loss."

He whispered the word to himself once or twice as though he were trying to get accustomed to it. Jacob, who supposed that he would feel like this himself if Tony were dead, attempted diffident consolation.

"It will pass," he said. "You will forget. Everything, in time, becomes easier. We do not continue to suffer."

"No," responded Lewis.

But he looked rebellious, as though he could not endure the thought that we do not continue to suffer, as though he would have liked to insist that our memories are immutable. He did in truth detest that pliant, slavish adaptability which enables the human race to survive. He cried out, in a sort of horror, to Jacob:

THE END.



### GREEN STOCKINGS

**I**N a white dress and stockings green  
You come as laughing eyed as spring,  
And nothing sweeter can be seen  
Though the whole earth is blossoming.

The little flowered winds that blow  
The bright green ribbons at your throat  
By May's own magic seem to know  
That youth goes like a whistled note.

So that is why I love you well,  
Despite the wise words old men say;  
For, as the winds, my heartbeats tell  
That no time flies so swift as May.

*Lawrence Lee.*

"I shall forget her."

Certainly he was not showing much disposition to be reasonable. Jacob, remembering the inordinate reasonableness of the lady upstairs, was inclined to sympathize with this mood. Still, he was harassed between them, and he understood how it was that the young Teresa, bewildered by two such monitors, had relinquished the baffling problem.

Sanger's ballet crashed to a final chord, and above the din of plates and knives, the babel of conversation in many languages, there rose up a faint crackle of applause. "Akbar" was a favorite number. Jacob sighed heavily and looked with a rare indifference at the red mullet on his plate. He wished himself at home and thought with a little stab, half pleasure and half pain, how Tony, when she heard his news, would sob and cry and turn to him for comfort. She needed him so seldom, and her tears were so beautiful, and it was fitting, in his opinion, that tears should be shed by somebody over this heavy day's work.

grimly. "He left England less than ten hours later."

"Perhaps you'd better take them down, then," she suggested.

"*Du lieber allmächtiger Gott!*" thought Jacob as he put them in his pocket and left her. "Perhaps I had better not! All women are wonderful, but this one—"

He was not a tactful man and he had a great regard for press notices; but the civility of showing these to Lewis seemed to him, at the moment, hardly well chosen.

Florence, left to herself, was also a little surprised at her own calm detachment.

She wrote to Charles:

You'll think I'm hard, but you must see that I have to be. Try to think of it as I do. Don't be so sorry for her that you forget me. It's not her death but my life that matters. I *cannot* live without him. And I have the future still to think of.

Teresa had had her chance and had lost him. And she had escaped from life so easily. Florence could not, really, even pretend to pity her, just now. To go on living, to be confronted every day with the necessity of thinking, to look forward into the empty years and make plans for them, to build up upon wrecked love a monument of worthy achievement—this seemed to her a much harder thing.

Jacob, going down, found Lewis in the vestibule, waiting, withdrawn in a secret, shocked meditation, while streams of people pushed past him into the hotel restaurant. He looked as if he had been there forever. Jacob tapped him on the shoulder and commanded him, with awkward compassion, to come in and have something to eat. They went into the restaurant, where a band was playing and much food was displayed. Jacob, despite the gravity of the occasion and a real pity for the man beside him, could not help brightening

up a little. He glanced richly round and a table was at once found for them.

"Your wife," he said to Lewis, "is resting. She will see you later."

Lewis looked at him vaguely and nodded.

"All right," he said.

"She thinks that you had better come to this hotel."

Lewis said all right again and added, as an afterthought, that he had no money. He was given to understand that he need not concern himself on that point. Jacob ordered a meal and they began to eat in silence.

Presently Lewis said:

"Sanger never liked him either."

"Who?" asked Jacob, rather startled.

"Trigorin."

"Trigorin! Oh, yes! We were speaking of him?"

"No." Lewis frowned and explained, with an effort. "They're playing the ballet music from 'Akbar.'"

"Ach! So they are. And Trigorin did the dances. Yes!"

Both men listened to the vigorous measures which, since Sanger's death, had become so popular. Jacob thought that he should produce "Akbar" at one of his places. He began to estimate in his mind the risk and the probable vogue which was just beginning. He thought of the immense volume of work left by Sanger and still unproduced, and exclaimed:

"That man! His influence, as yet, is scarcely felt. He has left so much behind him that is vital!"

Lewis did not hear. He was thinking of Trigorin and had escaped for a moment into the mountain spring. He was breakfasting with the absurd creature in the little inn at Erfurt. He breathed again the heavenly air as the train panted up through the pine woods; he heard the cow bells in the high pastures. And again he teased Trigorin as they steamed across the lake to the landing stage where Tessa waited. Here the

memory turned to present anguish, for at the end of it, as at the end of every thought, lay the discovery of Tessa dead. He had got there before he had quite done smiling at Trigorin on the boat, and Jacob asked what the joke was.

"I was thinking of our loss," he explained. "Tessa—I mean—loss."

He whispered the word to himself once or twice as though he were trying to get accustomed to it. Jacob, who supposed that he would feel like this himself if Tony were dead, attempted diffident consolation.

"It will pass," he said. "You will forget. Everything, in time, becomes easier. We do not continue to suffer."

"No," responded Lewis.

But he looked rebellious, as though he could not endure the thought that we do not continue to suffer, as though he would have liked to insist that our memories are immutable. He did in truth detest that pliant, slavish adaptability which enables the human race to survive. He cried out, in a sort of horror, to Jacob:

"I shall forget her."

Certainly he was not showing much disposition to be reasonable. Jacob, remembering the inordinate reasonableness of the lady upstairs, was inclined to sympathize with this mood. Still, he was harassed between them, and he understood how it was that the young Teresa, bewildered by two such monitors, had relinquished the baffling problem.

Sanger's ballet crashed to a final chord, and above the din of plates and knives, the babel of conversation in many languages, there rose up a faint crackle of applause. "Akbar" was a favorite number. Jacob sighed heavily and looked with a rare indifference at the red mullet on his plate. He wished himself at home and thought with a little stab, half pleasure and half pain, how Tony, when she heard his news, would sob and cry and turn to him for comfort. She needed him so seldom, and her tears were so beautiful, and it was fitting, in his opinion, that tears should be shed by somebody over this heavy day's work.

THE END.



### GREEN STOCKINGS

**I**N a white dress and stockings green  
You come as laughing eyed as spring,  
And nothing sweeter can be seen  
Though the whole earth is blossoming.

The little flowered winds that blow  
The bright green ribbons at your throat  
By May's own magic seem to know  
That youth goes like a whistled note.

So that is why I love you well,  
Despite the wise words old men say;  
For, as the winds, my heartbeats tell  
That no time flies so swift as May.

*Lawrence Lee.*

# Stones From The Glass-House Gang

WHAT mighty ills have not been done by woman!  
Who was't betrayed the capitol? A woman!  
Who lost Mark Antony the world? A woman!  
Who was the cause of a long ten years' war,  
And laid at last old Troy in ashes? Woman!  
Destructive, damnable, deceitful woman!—*Thomas Otway.*

WE shall find no fiend in hell can match the fury of a disappointed woman.  
Scorned! Slighted! Dismissed without a parting pang.—*Colley Cibber.*

MEN, some to business, some to pleasure take;  
But every woman is at heart a rake.—*Alexander Pope.*

A WOMAN is the creature of her temper; her husband, her children, and her  
servants are its victims.—*Henry Harland.*

'Tis woman that seduces all mankind;  
By her we first were taught the wheedling arts.—*John Gay.*

IT is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman  
in a wide house. It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious  
and an angry woman. A continual dropping in a very rainy day and a contentious  
woman are alike. Whosoever hideth her hideth the wind, and the ointment of  
his right hand.—*Proverbs.*

THERE'S nothing in the world worse than a woman shameless by nature, save  
some other woman.—*Aristophanes.*

A WOMAN is always changeable and capricious.—*Virgil.*

WOMAN is often fickle. Foolish is he who trusts her.—*François I.*  
(Scratched with his ring on a window of Chambord Castle.)

WHAT is lighter than a feather? Dust. What is lighter than dust? The  
wind. What is lighter than the wind? Woman. What is lighter than a woman?  
Nothing.—*Latin Proverb.*

WHO can describe  
Women's hypocrisies, their subtle wiles,  
Betraying smiles, feigned tears, inconstancies,  
Their painted outsides and corrupted minds,  
The sum of all their follies and their falsehoods?—*Thomas Otway.*

*Hamlet:* I have heard of your paintings too well enough; God hath given you one face and you make yourselves another. You jig, you amble, and you lisp, and nickname God's creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance. Go to! I'll no more of it; it hath made me mad.—*William Shakespeare.*

◆◆◆

Oh, why did God,  
Creator wise, that peopled highest Heaven  
With spirits masculine, create at last  
This novelty on earth, this fair defect  
Of nature, and not fill the world at once  
With men as angels without feminine,  
Or find some other way to generate  
Mankind? This mischief had not then befallen.—*John Milton.*

◆◆◆

WERE there no women, men might live like gods.—*Thomas Dekker.*

◆◆◆

WHEN toward the devil's house we tread,  
Woman's a thousand steps ahead.—*Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.*

◆◆◆

WERE'T not for gold and woman there would be no damnation.—*Cyril Tourneur.*

◆◆◆

If thou hast wounded the pride and self-love of a woman, if she thought that thou wouldst whine and thou has not whined when she beat thee, and thou didst not fawn in her presence, but hast tugged at thy chain and hast broken it, know that she will never and never forgive thee, and her hatred, more raging than that of any man living, will always pursue thee.—*Henryk Sienkiewicz.*

◆◆◆

Must not a woman be  
A feather on the sea  
Swayed to and fro by every wind and tide?  
Of as uncertain speed  
As snowball from the mead?—*John Keats.*

◆◆◆

It will be found that the fundamental fault of the female character is that it has no sense of justice.—*Arthur Schopenhauer.*

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To seduce their neighbor to a favorable opinion, and afterward to believe implicitly in this opinion of their neighbor—who can do this conjuring trick so well as women?—*Friedrich Nietzsche.*

◆◆◆

WHEN women love us, they forgive us everything, even our crimes; when they do not love us, they give us credit for nothing, not even our virtues.—*Anonymous.*

By  
Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch  
*Author of*



*'Noughts  
and  
Crosses'*

The  
OMNIBUS

ALL that follows was spoken in a small tavern, a stone's throw from Cheapside, the day before I left London. It was spoken in a dull voice, across a greasy tablecloth, and amid an atmosphere so thick with the reek of cooking that one longed to change it for the torrid street again, to broil in an ampler furnace. Old Tom Pickford spake it, who has been a clerk for fifty-two years in Tweedy's East India warehouse, and in all that time has never been out of London, but when he takes a holiday spends it in hanging about Tweedy's, and observing that unlovely place of business from the outside. The dust, if not the iron, of Tweedy's has entered into his soul; and Tweedy's young men know him as "The Mastodon." He is a thin, bald septuagenarian, with sloping shoulders, and a habit of regarding the pavement when he walks, so that he seems to steer his way by instinct rather than sight. In general he keeps silence while eating his chop; and on this occasion there

was something unnatural in his utterance, a divorce of manner between the speaker and his words, such as one would expect in a sibyl declaiming under stress of the god. I fancied it had something to do with a black necktie that he wore instead of the blue bird's-eye cravat familiar to Tweedy's, and with his extraordinary conduct in refusing to-day the chop that the waiter brought, and limiting his lunch to cheese and lettuce.

Having pulled the lettuce to pieces, he pushed himself back a little from the table, looked over his spectacles at me, then at the tablecloth, and began in a dreamy voice:

"Old Gabriel is dead. I heard the news at the office this morning, and went out and bought a black tie. I am the oldest man in Tweedy's now—older by six years than Sam Collins, who comes next; so there is no mistake about it. Sam is looking for the place; I saw it in his eye when he told me, and I expect he'll get it. But I'm

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the oldest clerk in Tweedy's. Only God Almighty can alter that, and it's very satisfactory to me. I don't care about the money. Sam Collins will be stuck up over it, like enough; but he'll never write a hand like Gabriel's, not if he lives to be a hundred; and he knows it, and knows I'll be there to remind him of it. Gabriel's was a beautiful fist—so small, too, if he chose. Why, once, in his spare hours, he wrote out all the Psalms, with the headings, on one side of a folio sheet, and had it framed and hung up in his parlor, out at Shepherd's Bush. He died in the night—oh, yes, quite easily. He was down at the office all yesterday, and spoke to me as brisk as a bird. They found him dead in his bed this morning.

"I seem cut up about it? Well, not exactly. Ah, you noticed that I refused my chop to-day. Bless your soul, that's not on Gabriel's account. I am well on in years, and I suppose it would be natural of me to pity old men, and expect pity. But I can't; no, *it's only the young that I pity*. If you *must* know, I didn't take a chop to-day because I haven't the money in my pocket to pay for it. You see, there was this black tie, that I gave eighteenpence for; but something else happened this morning that I'll tell you about.

"I came down in a bus, as usual. You remember what muggy weather it was up to ten o'clock—though you wouldn't think it, to feel the heat now. Well, the bus was packed, inside and out. At least, there was just room for one more inside when we pulled up by Charing Cross, and there he got in—a boy with a stick and a bundle in a blue handkerchief.

"He wasn't more than thirteen; bound for the docks, you could tell at a glance; and by the way he looked about, you could tell as easily that in stepping outside Charing Cross station he'd set foot on London stones for the first time. God knows how it struck

him—the slush and drizzle, the ugly shop fronts, the horses slipping in the brown mud, the crowd on the pavement pushing him this side and that. The poor little chap was standing in the middle of it with dazed eyes, like a hare's, when the bus pulled up. His eyelids were pink and swollen; but he wasn't crying, though he wanted to. Instead, he gave a gulp as he came on board with stick and bundle, and tried to look brave as a lion.

"I'd have given worlds to speak to him, but I couldn't. On my word, sir, I should have cried. It wasn't so much the little chap's look. But to the knot of his bundle there was tied a bunch of cottage flowers—sweet williams, boy's love, and a rose or two—and the sight and smell of them in that stuffy omnibus were like tears on thirsty eyelids. It's the young that I pity, sir. For Gabriel, in his bed up at Shepherd's Bush, there's no more to be said, as far as I can see; and as for me, I'm the oldest clerk in Tweedy's, which is very satisfactory. It's the young faces, set toward the road along which we have traveled, that trouble me. Sometimes, sir, I lie awake in my lodgings and listen, and the whole of this London seems filled with the sound of children's feet running, and I can sob aloud.

"You may say that it is only selfishness, and what I really pity is my own boyhood. I dare say you're right. It's certain that, as I kept glancing at the boy and his sea kit and his bunch of flowers, my mind went back to the January morning, sixty-five years back, when the coach took me off for the first time from the village where I was born to a London charity school. I was worse off than the boy in the omnibus, for I had just lost father and mother. Yet it was the sticks and stones and flower beds that I mostly thought of. I went round and said good-by to the lilacs, and told them to be in flower

by the time I came back. I said to the rosebush, 'You must be as high as my window next May; you know you only missed it by three inches last summer.' Then I went to the cow house, and kissed the cows, one by one. They were to be sold by auction the very next week, but I guessed nothing of it, and ordered them not to forget me. And last I looked at the swallows' nests under the thatch—the last year's nests—and told myself that they would be filled again when I returned. I remembered this, and how I stretched out my hands to the place from the coach top; and how at Reading, where we stopped, I spent the two shillings that I possessed in a coconut and a bright clasp knife; and how I broke the knife in opening the nut; and how, when I opened it, the nut was sour; and how I cried myself to sleep, and woke in London.

"The young men in Tweedy's, though they respect my long standing there, make fun of me at times because I never take a holiday in the country. Why, sir, *I dare not*. I should wander back to my old village, and—Well, I know how it would be then. I should find it smaller and meaner; I should search about for the flowers and nests, and listen for the music that I knew sixty-five years ago, and remember; and they would not be discoverable. Also every face would stare at me, for all the faces I know are dead. Then I should think I had missed my way and come to the wrong

place; or, worse, that no such spot ever existed, and I have been cheating myself all these years; that, in fact, I was mad all the while, and have no stable reason for existing—I, the oldest clerk in Tweedy's! To be sure, there would be my parents' headstones in the churchyard. But what are they, if the churchyard itself is changed?

"As it is, with three hundred pounds per annum, and enough laid by to keep him, if I fail, an old bachelor has no reason to grumble. But the sight of that little chap's nosegay, and the thought of the mother who tied it there, made my heart swell as I fancy the earth must swell when rain is coming. His eyes filled once, and he brushed them under pretense of pulling his cap forward, and stole a glance round to see if any one had noticed him. The other passengers were busy with their own thoughts, and I pretended to stare out of the window opposite; but there was the drop, sure enough, on his hand as he laid it on his lap again.

"He was bound for the docks, and thence for the open sea, and I, that was bound for Tweedy's only, had to get out at the top of Cheapside. I know the bus conductor—a very honest man—and, in getting out, I slipped half a crown into his hand to give to the boy, with my blessing, at his journey's end. When I picture his face, sir, I wish I had made it five shillings, and gone without a new tie and dinner altogether."



I HAVE not by any means a quick understanding. When I love a person very tenderly indeed, it seems to brighten. My comprehension is quickened when my affection is.—*Charles Dickens.*



To affect a gesture, an opinion, a phrase, because it is the rage with a large number of persons, or to hold it in abhorrence because another set of persons very little, if at all, better informed cry it down to distinguish themselves from the former, is in either case equal vulgarity and absurdity.—*William Hazlitt.*

# An Ode From Hafiz

*Richard Le Gallienne*

THE days of distance and the nights apart  
Are at an end;  
All the long lonely winter of the heart  
Is at an end;  
No more forever shall the autumn gloom,  
No more forever shall December freeze;  
For lo! the sweet, swift-footed April breeze  
Fills all the world with fragrance and with bloom.  
O my own love and friend,  
Our grief is at an end!

Our grief is ended and our joys begun;  
We have climbed the night—at last we reach the sun;  
And the wide world from pole to pole is bright  
With the effulgent face of our delight,  
From shining end to end.

Deep in the scented shadow of your hair  
I bow my head and weep for very bliss,  
So happy I can scarce believe me there—  
Too happy even to kiss;  
For, love, O most desired and lovely friend,  
Through your great locks I see the rising sun;  
The solitary night is at an end,  
Our morning is begun.

What care I if, for love of your fair face,  
To the wide winds my work and place I throw!  
My work is just to love you, and the place  
Just where you are the only place I know.

Ah! to the wine shop swiftly let us come,  
With happy harp and loud, exultant drum,  
And with a mighty voice the Saki call—  
“Deep cups and many, many cups for all!”  
What matter how much money we shall spend,  
For, O most lovely and beloved friend,  
To-day the grief of Hafiz, the long grief,  
In a wild blessedness beyond belief  
Is at an end.

# E. W. Hornung *by* E. W. Hornung

*Author of*



*"The Ides of March"*  
*"Gentlemen & Players"*

## WILLFUL MURDER

*A Story of Raffles. "The Amateur Cracksman"*

OF the various robberies in which we were both concerned, it is but the few, I find, that will bear telling at any length. Our most successful escapades would prove the greatest weariness of all in narrative form; and none more so than the dull affair of the Ardagh emeralds, some eight or nine weeks after the Milchester cricket week. The business, however, had a sequel that I would rather forget than all our burglaries put together.

It was the evening after our return from Ireland, and I was waiting at my rooms for Raffles, who had gone off as usual to dispose of the plunder. Raffles had his own method of conducting this very vital branch of our business, which I was well content to leave entirely in his hands. He drove the bargains, I believe, in a thin but subtle disguise of the flashy-seedy order, and always in the Cockney dialect of which he had made himself a master. Moreover, he

invariably employed the same "fence," who was ostensibly a money lender in a small—but yet notorious—way, and in reality a rascal as remarkable as Raffles himself. Only lately I also had been to the man, but in my proper person. We had needed capital for the getting of these very emeralds, and I had raised a hundred pounds, on the terms you would expect, from a soft-spoken gray-beard with an ingratiating smile, an incessant bow, and the shiftest old eyes that ever flew from rim to rim of a pair of spectacles. So the original sinews and the final spoils of war came in this case from the selfsame source.

But these same final spoils I was still to see, and I waited and waited with an impatience that grew upon me with the growing dusk. At my open window I had played Sister Ann until the faces in the street below were no longer distinguishable. And now I was tearing to and fro in the grip of horrible

hypotheses—a grip that tightened when at last the lift gates opened with a clatter outside—that held me breathless until a well-known tattoo followed on my door.

"In the dark!" said Raffles as I dragged him in. "Why, Bunny, what's wrong?"

"Nothing—now you've come," said I, shutting the door behind him in a fever of relief and anxiety. "Well? Well? What did they fetch?"

"Five hundred."

"Down?"

"Got it in my pocket."

"Good man!" I cried. "You don't know what a stew I've been in. I'll switch on the light. I've been thinking of you and nothing else for the last hour. I—I was ass enough to think something had gone wrong!"

Raffles was smiling when the white light filled the room, but for the moment I did not perceive the peculiarity of his smile. I was fatuously full of my own late tremors and present relief; and my first idiotic act was to spill some whisky and squirt the soda water all over in my anxiety to do instant justice to the occasion.

"So you thought something had happened?" said Raffles, leaning back in my chair as he lit a cigarette, and looking much amused. "What should you say if something had?"

And suddenly I saw that his collar was limp, his hair matted, his boots thick with dust.

"The police?" I whispered, aghast.

"Oh, dear, no; only old Baird."

"Baird! But wasn't it Baird who took the emeralds?"

"It was."

"Then how came he to chase you?"

"My dear fellow, I'll tell you if you give me a chance; it's really nothing to get in the least excited about. Old Baird has at last spotted that I'm not quite the common cracksmen I would

have him think me. So he's been doing his best to run me to my burrow."

"And you call that nothing!"

"It would be something if he had succeeded; but he has still to do that. I admit, however, that he made me sit up for the time being. It all comes of going on the job so far from home. There was the old brute with the whole thing in his morning paper. He *knew* it must have been done by some fellow who could pass himself off for a gentleman, and I saw his eyebrows go up the moment I told him I was the man, with the same old twang that you could cut with a paper knife. I did my best to get out of it—swore I had a pal who was a real swell—but I saw very plainly that I had given myself away. He gave up haggling. He paid my price as though he enjoyed doing it. But I *felt* him following me when I made tracks; though, of course, I didn't turn round to see."

"Why not?"

"My dear Bunny, it's the very worst thing you can do. As long as you look unsuspecting they'll keep their distance, and so long as they keep their distance you stand a chance. Once show that you know you're being followed, and it's flight or fight for all you're worth. I never even looked round; and mind you never do in the same hole. I just hurried up to Blackfriars and booked for High Street, Kensington, at the top of my voice; and as the train was leaving Sloane Square out I hopped, and up all those stairs like a lamplighter, and round to the studio by the back streets. Well, to be on the safe side, I lay low there all the afternoon, hearing nothing in the least suspicious, and only wishing I had a window to look through instead of that beastly skylight. However, the coast seemed clear enough, and thus far it was my mere idea that he would follow me; there was nothing to show he had. So at last I marched out

in my proper rig—almost straight into old Baird's arms!"

**“What on earth did you do?”**

"Walked past him as though I had never set eyes on him in my life, and didn't then; took a hansom in the King's Road, and drove like the deuce to Clapham Junction; rushed on to the nearest platform, without a ticket, jumped into the first train I saw, got out at Twickenham, walked full tilt back to Richmond, took the District to Charing Cross, and here I am! Ready for a tub and a change, and the best dinner the club can give us. I came to you first, because I thought you might be getting anxious. Come round with me, and I won't keep you long."

But we were both rather silent on the way. I, for my part, was wondering what Raffles would do about the studio in Chelsea, whither, at all events, he had been successfully dogged. To me the point seemed one of immediate importance, but when I mentioned it he said there was time enough to think about that. His one other remark was made after we had nodded—in Bond Street—to a young blood of our acquaintance who happened to be getting himself a bad name.

"Poor Jack Rutter!" said Raffles with a sigh. "Nothing's sadder than to see a fellow going to the bad like that. He's about mad with drink and debt, poor devil! Did you see his eye? Odd that we should have met him to-night, by the way; it's old Baird who's said to have skinned him. By God, but I'd like to skin old Baird!"

And his tone took a sudden, low fury, made the more noticeable by another long silence, which lasted, indeed, throughout an admirable dinner at the club, and for some time after we had settled down in a quiet corner of the smoking room with our coffee and cigars. Then at last I saw Raffles looking at me with his lazy smile, and I knew that the morose fit was at an end.

"I dare say you wonder what I've been thinking about all this time?" said he. "I've been thinking what rot it is to go doing things by halves!"

"Well," said I, returning his smile, "that's not a charge that you can bring against yourself, is it?"

"I'm not so sure," said Raffles, blowing a meditative puff; "as a matter of fact, I was thinking less of myself than of that poor devil of a Jack Rutter. There's a fellow who does things by halves; he's only half gone to the bad; and look at the difference between him and us! He's under the thumb of a villainous money lender; we are solvent citizens. He's taken to drink; we're as sober as we are solvent. His pals are beginning to cut him; our difficulty is to keep the pal from the door. *Enfin*, he begs or borrows, which is stealing by halves; and we steal outright and are done with it. Obviously ours is the more honest course. Yet I'm not sure, Bunny, but we're doing the thing by halves ourselves!"

"Why? What more could we do?"

"What more?" said Raffles. "Well, murder—for one thing."

“Rot!”

"A matter of opinion, my dear Bunny; I don't mean it for rot. I've told you before that the biggest man alive is the man who's committed a murder, and not yet been found out; at least he ought to be, but he so very seldom has the soul to appreciate himself. Just think of it! Think of coming in here and talking to the men, very likely about the murder itself; and knowing you've done it; and wondering how they'd look if *they* knew! Oh, it would be great, simply great! But, besides all that, when you were caught there'd be a merciful and dramatic end of you. You'd fill the bill for a few weeks, and then snuff out with a flourish of extra specials; you wouldn't rust with a vile repose for seven or fourteen years."

"Good old Raffles!" I chuckled. "I begin to forgive you for being in bad form at dinner."

"But I was never more earnest in my life."

"Go on!"

"I mean it."

"You know very well that you wouldn't commit a murder, whatever else you might do."

"I know very well I'm going to commit one to-night!"

He had been leaning back in the saddlebag chair, watching me with keen eyes sheathed by languid lids; now he started forward, and his eyes leaped to mine like cold steel from the scabbard. They struck home to my slow wits; their meaning was no longer in doubt. I, who knew the man, read murder in his clenched hands and murder in his locked lips, but a hundred murders in those hard, blue eyes.

"Baird?" I faltered, moistening my lips with my tongue.

"Of course."

"But you said it didn't matter about the room in Chelsea?"

"I told a lie."

"Anyway, you gave him the slip afterward!"

"That was another. I didn't. I thought I had when I came up to you this evening; but when I looked out of your window—you remember?—to make assurance doubly sure, there he was on the opposite pavement down below."

"And you never said a word about it!"

"I wasn't going to spoil your dinner, Bunny, and I wasn't going to let you spoil mine. But there he was as large as life, and, of course, he followed us to the Albany. A fine game for him to play, a game after his mean old heart: blackmail from me, bribes from the police, the one bidding against the other; but he shan't play it with me, he shan't live to, and the world will have

an extortioner the less. Waiter! Two Scotch whiskies and sodas. I'm off at eleven, Bunny; it's the only thing to be done."

"You know where he lives, then?"

"Yes, out Willesden way, and alone; the fellow's a miser among other things. I long ago found out all about him."

Again I looked round the room; it was a young man's club, and young men were laughing, chatting, smoking, drinking, on every hand. One nodded to me through the smoke. Like a machine I nodded to him, and turned back to Raffles with a groan.

"Surely you will give him a chance!" I urged. "The very sight of your pistol should bring him to terms."

"It wouldn't make him keep them."

"But you might try the effect?"

"I probably shall. Here's a drink for you, Bunny. Wish me luck."

"I'm coming, too."

"I don't want you."

"But I must come!"

An ugly gleam shot from the steel-blue eyes.

"To interfere?" said Raffles.

"Not I."

"You give me your word?"

"I do."

"Bunny, if you break it——"

"You may shoot me, too!"

"I most certainly should," said Raffles solemnly. "So you come at your own peril, my dear man; but, if you are coming—well, the sooner the better, for I must stop at my rooms on the way."

Five minutes later I was waiting for him at the Piccadilly entrance to the Albany. I had a reason for remaining outside. It was the feeling—half hope, half fear—that Angus Baird might still be on our trail—that some more immediate and less cold-blooded way of dealing with him might result from a sudden encounter between the money lender and myself. I would not warn him of his danger; but I would avert tragedy at

all costs. And when no such encounter had taken place, and Raffles and I were fairly on our way to Willesden, that, I think, was still my honest resolve. I would not break my word if I could help it, but it was a comfort to feel that I could break it if I liked, on an understood penalty.

I have a poignant recollection of the hour it took us to reach the house. We walked across St. James' Park—I can see the lights now, bright on the bridge and blurred in the water—and we had some minutes to wait for the last train to Willesden. It left at eleven twenty-one, I remember, and Raffles was put out to find it did not go on to Kensal Rise. We had to get out at Willesden Junction and walk on through the streets into fairly open country that happened to be quite new to me. I could never find the house again. I remember, however, that we were on a dark footpath between woods and fields when the clocks began striking twelve.

"Surely," said I, "we shall find him in bed and asleep?"

"I hope we do," said Raffles grimly.

"Then you mean to break in?"

"What else did you think?"

I had not thought about it at all; the ultimate crime had monopolized my mind. Beside it burglary was a bagatelle, but one to deprecate none the less. I saw obvious objections: the man was *au fait* with cracksmen and their ways: he would certainly have firearms, and might be the first to use them.

"I could wish nothing better," said Raffles. "Then it will be man to man, and devil take the worst shot. You don't suppose I prefer foul play to fair, do you? But die he must, by one or the other, or it's a long stretch for you and me."

"Better that than this!"

"Then stay where you are, my good fellow. I told you I didn't want you; and this is the house. So good night."

I could see no house at all—only the

angle of a high wall rising solitary in the night, with the starlight glittering on battlements of broken glass; and in the wall a tall, green gate, bristling with spikes, and showing a front for battering-rams in the feeble rays an outlying lamp-post cast across the new-made road. It seemed to me a road of building sites, with but this one house built, all by itself, at one end; but the night was too dark for more than a mere impression.

Raffles, however, had seen the place by daylight, and had come prepared for the special obstacles; already he was reaching up and putting champagne corks on the spikes, and in another moment he had his folded covert coat across the corks. I stepped back as he raised himself, and saw a little pyramid of slates snip the sky above the gate; as he squirmed over I ran forward, and had my own weight on the spikes and corks and covert coat when he gave the latter a tug.

"Coming after all?"

"Rather!"

"Take care, then; the place is all bell wires and springs. It's no soft thing, this! There—stand still while I take off the corks."

The garden was very small and new, with a grass plot still in separate sods, but a quantity of full-grown laurel stuck into the raw clay beds. "Bells in themselves," as Raffles whispered; "there's nothing else rustles so—cunning old beast!" And we gave them a wide berth as we crept across the grass.

"He's gone to bed!"

"I don't think so, Bunny. I believe he's seen us."

"Why?"

"I saw a light."

"Where?"

"Downstairs, for an instant, when I—"

His whisper died away; he had seen the light again; and so had I.

It lay like a golden rod under the

front door—and vanished. It reappeared like a gold thread under the lintel—and vanished for good. We heard the stairs creak, creak, and cease, also for good. We neither saw nor heard any more, though we stood waiting on the grass till our feet were soaked with the dew.

"I'm going in," said Raffles at last. "I don't believe he saw us at all. I wish he had. This way."

We trod gingerly on the path, but the gravel stuck to our wet soles, and grated horribly in a little tiled veranda with a glass door leading within. It was through this glass that Raffles had first seen the light; and he now proceeded to take out a pane, with the diamond, the pot of treacle, and the sheet of brown paper which were seldom omitted from his impedimenta.

Raffles now inserted his hand, turned the key in the lock, and, by making a long arm, succeeded in drawing the bolt at the bottom of the door; it proved to be the only one, and the door opened, though not very wide.

"What's that?" said Raffles, as something crunched beneath his feet on the very threshold.

"A pair of spectacles," I whispered, picking them up. I was still fingering the broken lenses and the bent rims when Raffles tripped and almost fell, with a gasping cry that he made no effort to restrain.

"Hush, man, hush!" I entreated under my breath. "He'll hear you!"

For answer his teeth chattered—even his—and I heard him fumbling with his matches.

"No, Bunny; he won't hear us," whispered Raffles presently; and he rose from his knees and lit a gas as the match burned down.

Angus Baird was lying on his own floor, dead, with his gray hairs glued together by his blood; near him a poker with the black end glistening; in a corner his desk, ransacked, littered. A

clock ticked noisily on the chimney piece; for perhaps a hundred seconds there was no other sound.

"That light!" said I hoarsely; "the light we saw under the door!"

With a start he turned to me.

"It's true! I had forgotten it. It was in here I saw it first!"

"He must be upstairs still!"

"If he is, we'll soon rout him out. Come on!"

But three doors presented themselves; the first opened into a bedroom with the bed turned down but undisturbed; the second room was empty in every sense; the third door was locked.

Raffles lit the landing gas.

"He's in there," said he, cocking his revolver. "Do you remember how we used to break into the studies at school? Here goes!"

His flat foot crashed over the key-hole, the lock gave, the door flew open, and in the sudden draft the landing gas heeled over like a cobble in a squall; as the flame righted itself I saw a fixed bath, two bath towels knotted together—an open window—a cowering figure—and Raffles struck aghast on the threshold.

"Jack—Rutter?"

The words came thick and slow with horror, and in horror I heard myself repeating them, while the cowering figure by the bathroom window rose gradually erect.

"It's you!" he whispered, in amazement no less than our own; "it's you two! What's it mean, Raffles? I saw you get over the gate; a bell rang—the place is full of them. Then you broke in. What's it all mean?"

"We may tell you that, when you tell us what in God's name you've done, Rutter!"

"Done? What have I done?" The unhappy wretch came out into the light with bloodshot, blinking eyes, and a bloody shirt front. "You know—you've seen—but I'll tell you if you like. I've

killed a robber; that's all. I've killed a robber, a usurer, a jackal, a blackmailer, the cleverest and the cruellest villain unhung. I'm ready to hang for him. I'd kill him again!"

And he looked us fiercely in the face, a fine defiance in his dissipated eyes; his breast heaving, his jaw like a rock.

"Shall I tell you how it happened?" he went passionately on. "He's made my life a hell these weeks and months past. You may know that. A perfect hell! Well, to-night I met him in Bond Street. Do you remember when I met you fellows? He wasn't twenty yards behind you; he was on your tracks, Raffles; he saw me nod to you, and stopped me and asked me who you were. He seemed as keen as knives to know, I couldn't think why, and didn't care, either, for I saw my chance.

"I said I'd tell him all about you if he'd give me a private interview. He said he wouldn't. I said he should, and held him by the coat; by the time I let him go you were out of sight, and I waited where I was till he came back in despair. I had the whip hand of him then. I could dictate where the interview should be, and I made him take me home with him, still swearing to tell him all about you when we'd had our talk. Well, when we got here I made him give me something to eat, putting him off and off; and about ten o'clock I heard the gate shut. I waited a bit, and then asked him if he lived alone.

"'Not at all,' says he; 'did you not see the servant?'

"I said I'd seen her, but I thought I'd heard her go; if I was mistaken, no doubt she would come when she was called; and I yelled three times at the top of my voice. Of course there was no servant to come. I knew that, because I came to see him one night last week, and he interviewed me himself through the gate, but wouldn't open it. Well, when I had done yelling, and not

a soul had come near us, he was as white as that ceiling. Then I told him we could have our chat at last; and I picked the poker out of the fender, and told him how he'd robbed me, but, by Heaven, he shouldn't rob me any more. I gave him three minutes to write and sign a settlement of all his iniquitous claims against me, or have his brains beaten out over his own carpet. He thought a minute, and then went to his desk for pen and paper. In two seconds he was round like lightning with a revolver, and I went for him bald-headed. He fired two or three times and missed; you can find the holes if you like; but I hit him every time—my God! I was like a savage till the thing was done. And then I didn't care. I went through his desk looking for my own bills, and was coming away when you turned up. I said I didn't care, nor do I; but I was going to give myself up to-night, and shall still; so you see I shan't give you fellows much trouble!"

He was done; and there we stood on the landing of the lonely house, the low, thick, eager voice still racing and ringing through our ears; the dead man below, and in front of us his impenitent slayer. I knew to whom the impenitence would appeal when he had heard the story, and I was not mistaken.

"That's all rot," said Raffles, speaking after a pause; "we shan't let you give yourself up."

"You shan't stop me! What would be the good? The woman saw me; it would only be a question of time; and I can't face waiting to be taken. Think of it: waiting for them to touch you on the shoulder! No, no, no; I'll give myself up and get it over."

His speech was changed; he faltered, floundered. It was as though a clearer perception of his position had come with the bare idea of escape from it.

"But listen to me," urged Raffles; "we're here at our peril ourselves. We

broke in like thieves to enforce redress for a grievance very like your own. But don't you see? We took out a pane—did the thing like regular burglars. Regular, burglars will get the credit of all the rest!"

"You mean that I shan't be suspected?"

"I do."

"But I don't want to get off scot-free," cried Rutter hysterically. "I've killed him. I know that. But it was in self-defense; it wasn't murder. I must own up and take the consequences. I shall go mad if I don't!"

His hands twitched; his lips quivered; the tears were in his eyes. Raffles took him roughly by the shoulder.

"Look here, you fool! If the three of us were caught here now, do you know what those consequences would be? We should swing in a row at Newgate in six weeks' time! You talk as though we were sitting in a club; don't you know it's one o'clock in the morning, and the lights on, and a dead man down below? For God's sake pull yourself together, and do what I tell you, or you're a dead man yourself."

"I wish I was one!" Rutter sobbed. "I wish I had his revolver to blow my own brains out. It's lying under him. Oh, my God, my God!"

His knees knocked together; the frenzy of reaction was at its height. We had to take him downstairs between us, and so through the front door out into the open air.

All was still outside—all but the smothered weeping of the unstrung wretch upon our hands. Raffles returned for a moment to the house; then all was dark as well. The gate opened from within; we closed it carefully behind us; and so left the starlight shining on broken glass and polished spikes, one and all as we had found them.

We escaped; no need to dwell on our escape. Our murderer seemed set upon the scaffold—drunk with his deed, he was more trouble than six men drunk with wine. Again and again we threatened to leave him to his fate, to wash our hands of him. But incredible and unmerited luck was with the three of us. Not a soul did we meet between that and Willesden; and of those who saw us later, did one think of the two young men with crooked, white ties, supporting a third in a seemingly unmistakable condition, when the evening papers apprised the town of a terrible tragedy at Kensal Rise?

We walked to Maida Vale, and thence drove openly to my rooms. But I alone went upstairs; the other two proceeded to the Albany, and I saw no more of Raffles for forty-eight hours. He was not at his rooms when I called in the morning; he had left no word. When he reappeared the papers were full of the murder; and the man who had committed it was on the wide Atlantic, a steerage passenger from Liverpool to New York.

"There was no arguing with him," so Raffles told me; "either he must make a clean breast of it or flee the country. So I rigged him up at the studio, and we took the first train to Liverpool. Nothing would induce him to sit tight and enjoy the situation as I should have endeavored to do in his place; and it's just as well! I went to his diggings to destroy some papers, and what do you think I found? The police in possession; there's a warrant out against him already! The idiots think that window wasn't genuine, and the warrant's out. It won't be my fault if it's ever served!"

Nor, after all these years can I think it will be mine.

WHEN there is neither love nor hatred in the game, woman's play is mediocre.—*Friedrich Nietzsche.*

E. L. Grant Watson

Author of

*Innocent  
Desires*



The Case of  
Sir Reginald James Farquarson

UPON the round of the horizon no ship was visible. The liner was alone upon the sea, steaming northward toward England. Sir Reginald James Farquarson had risen early; he was on deck before any of the other passengers, and experienced with a sense of elation the soft, southwesterly wind, which, with an April freshness, came bearing the promise of an English spring. It was twenty years since he had been home, twenty years since he had tasted that subtile and delicate quality in the air. In the Pacific there had been beautiful days, no doubt, and soft, fresh breezes, but nothing quite like this, charged with the magic of home and of all the recollections of his youth. He leaned against the rail watching the waves as they dancingly passed by. Through his nostrils he drew in the sweet air, which somehow, as if by a direct communication, registered upon his heart a sensation of both joy and pain.

A tag of poetry came into Sir Reginald's head. "Oh, to be in England now that April's there." He didn't remember how it went on, but that was how the poem started. It was right, too, in the essential feeling. There was something about recapturing the first wild rapture. Very nice and desirable, but those poets—they lied too much; one couldn't do that; at any rate, not at fifty-six.

Was he really fifty-six? He didn't feel it. Physically he felt as strong and young as he had ever felt. But that first wild rapture, it was far away; there was a weight upon his spirit which not even his fine physical well-being could dispel. For many years that weight had pressed upon him, holding him very definitely in his place.

Was it the spring feeling in the air which made him look back so dubiously upon his past? He got a mental picture of himself, as he had been and as he was now. He could believe truth-

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fully that he was not yet altogether spoiled. He was slim with not a spare ounce of fat upon him, and he prided himself upon being always well dressed. He believed that the appearance of the outer covering helped considerably toward his inner satisfaction. Men complimented him on looking young and alert. He was proud of his personal appearance.

He sighed.

This spring air was lovely; but it made his heart ache; it led his thoughts back into the past. His life lay exposed; he questioned whether it had not been wasted. Thirty years of government service, and good, honest service, too, the best he could give. Successful? Yes, partly, but not very; not what he had hoped. A reliable man, but not distinguished, that was what people thought about him. In his youth he had hoped and dreamed of a career. How much he had sacrificed for that. Yes, *sacrificed*, and as a reward he had been given jobs of secondary importance. He had been chief justice in the Phronos Islands; he had been knighted—his wife had been pleased at that; and then for the last three years, he had been governor of the Tolawan Group.

A servant of the empire, a government servant, knowing well the system and carrying the stamp of its dignity. How well he knew it; his body had been its symbol, and no doubt he had been made strong by its communicated strength. Yes, the posts he had held had been important posts, but they were not the big jobs, the prizes; those had gone to other men.

The system had, of course, helped him, made him what he was, but it had pressed upon him with a weight which had seemed at times almost intolerable; that was why youth and hope had so nearly died. And not only the system, but his marriage, which seemed to him to have become part of the system, weighed upon him. He must acknowl-

edge that to himself if to no other man alive.

He had never loved his wife; that was the initial mistake. He had been fond of her in a way and had grown accustomed to her by now. Had she not shared his labors, and been with him to a countless number of bazaars and government-house at homes? She had been set up beside him as complementary symbol of his state. She was a good woman by all the official standards of goodness, but narrow and stupid; yes, he had to admit the harsh truth of those words. She and his daughters—those seven daughters, who were so plain, poor girls, that there was very little chance of their ever getting married—were of a different flesh and of a different psychic fiber from himself. They were of a different species almost; they didn't understand him; they didn't even suspect that there dwelt in his heart those vague aspirations which the spring wind now fretted.

He remembered that he had once been a boy. As a boy he had dreamed other dreams besides those of ambition. As a boy he had dreamed, like most boys, of beautiful women, and of one woman in particular. He had never seen her; she had been altogether a figment of his imagination. She was small with small hands and feet; she had long, yellow hair and blue eyes and a tip-tilted nose. But her expression was what counted most of all; it was a peculiar expression in which were blended both sadness and humor. A boy's dream and fantastic. He had never met any one at all approaching to that ideal.

He had looked for her, hoping, secretly believing in that dream. He had waited.

Then he had met his wife. She was Lord Purbrook's eldest daughter. If he were to marry her, both his social and official position would be strengthened. His feet would more firmly be planted upon the high road to the mak-

ing of his career. He was ambitious, and the field was full of able competitors; that other was but a boy's dream, the fantastic imagining of an adolescent. So, in experience, it had proved itself to be, since he had never met that peculiar, half-humorous, half-sad expression on any young girl's face. Why then should the April wind, this morning, so insistently revive that dream?

He had married, and from his marriage, his career, such as it was, had followed logically. He had been the servant of the system for thirty years, and had become the father of seven daughters, each plain and solid, like their mother. They were down below decks, all of them, in their cabins.

He had retired from service at fifty-six, though very well he knew that there were years of good work left in him yet. His wife and daughters had made him retire; for some years they had been urging him, and at length they had succeeded. What chances were there, argued his wife, for the girls to marry in Tolawan? There wasn't a great chance of their marrying anywhere, he thought. They were nice, well-domesticated girls, but not the sort that men looked at with admiration and desire. He was sorry for them, feeling the slight that nature had dealt. But how now could he help it? If they had been boys, it would not have mattered. If there had been but one boy, it would have made a great difference in his feeling for his family; but they were all girls, every one of them, and he had to admit that their intelligence was not great.

Every stroke of the propeller was taking him nearer to England and home; the thought was strangely moving on that spring morning, and yet what had he to look forward to?

He was wrong to have yielded, wrong to have retired so young; he should have been in harness for another ten years at least. Why, he believed, even

now, that if he had to start from the jump all over again he could make a place for himself, and force his way among the younger men, and make good, and if not succeed brilliantly as once he had dreamed, at least keep his head swimming. There were a score of tasks to which he could turn his hand and not fail.

He straightened his shoulders, and looked out over the sea with sharp blue eyes; they were narrowed a little, as if imaginatively seeing some such improbable eventuality. He heard a step behind him and turned. It was his second daughter, Amelia.

"Father, the gong has sounded for breakfast; aren't you coming?" Her broad, plain face beamed upon him.

"Yes, I'm coming, my dear. A lovely morning, don't you think?"

"Yes. When do we get in?"

"To-morrow night."

"I'm glad. I shall be glad to be off the boat, won't you?"

Sir Reginald did not answer, but followed his daughter down the companionway toward the saloon.

It was the morning after his first night on shore. Sir Reginald was in bed in one of the hotel bedrooms. He always had a room to himself. In at the window came the same soft air that so delicately had blown over the sea. It was an English spring morning at its best. There were thrushes singing. In that poem of Browning's there had been something about thrushes that he couldn't quite remember. He sat up in bed and looked round. Yes, this was England. Out of the window he could see a green grass plot. Even in dingy Liverpool there was grass, and it was English grass, wonderful—wonderful, just as the people had seemed wonderful: English people with English accents different from the colonial intonation. He rang the bell for his shav-

ing water, and lay back upon the pillows.

There was a knock at the door.

"Come in."

A neatly dressed housemaid entered. "Your hot water, sir." She went to his washstand and folded the towels, which overnight he had disarranged.

Sir Reginald colored a little and frowned. His eyes were fixed upon the mirror over the mantelpiece in which he could see the reflection of the girl's face. He gazed intently.

Yes, there was no mistake, this was the girl of his boyhood's imaginings. The color, shape, and size; and the expression—it was like that, but this girl was rather sadder than the girl he had imagined.

She turned and for a moment looked at him.

"Anything else you want, sir?"

"No, thank you, that will do."

The door closed, and he was alone, annoyed and ashamed at the quick beating of his heart. What damnable irony was this? Why should this girl's face turn up now of all times at this late period in his life? What meaning could she have for him now? She was separated from him by a social gulf as wide as it was fairly possible for it to be. Not only that, she could not be more than twenty-two or three, and he was fifty-six. All tradition and custom were between them, and yet—and yet his heart was beating as it had not beaten for twenty years. New sources of life were surging upward into his brain.

"Impossible!"

He got up, put on his dressing gown, and shaved. He looked intently at his face in the glass. He was surprised at the brightness of his eyes and the pink flush of life under his clear skin.

That morning he didn't eat very much breakfast, and as soon after as he was able he escaped from his family and went for a walk. It was all damned

foolish, he assured himself, but he was pleased at his wife's decision to stay in Liverpool for another night before traveling southward to London. He would see the girl again. What crass folly! What good would that do? No good at all; it would only bring pain, for the awakening of old emotions, the opening up of the closed channels of feeling was painful. Yes, devilish painful and humiliating, no doubt about that! He would have liked to dismiss the whole thing as an absurd fancy. What was the matter with him? It was the damned idleness of the voyage that had let him run to seed like this. If only he had work to do! Work was a good anodyne; he had found out that long ago. As it was, he couldn't get rid of that sweet, wrenching pain, which, like a hook, was stuck in his heart, and which, every now and then, was jerked at wantonly by a malicious fate.

He called upon the long discipline of years to help him. He was an English gentleman, a knight of the realm, a governor of a crown colony; how was it that he could be affected by a chance-met housemaid in an hotel? The thing ought, by all rules of decency, to be impossible.

That afternoon he spent in the university library reading, so far as he could summon his attention, a book on international law in which he was interested. In the evening he dined with the professor of anthropology and returned late to the hotel.

As he was walking along the corridor to his room, he heard curious noises issuing from one of the little alcoves which give off hotel passages; one of those alcoves in which there are taps where water can be drawn and bottles filled. The sound was not quite like the orthodox sound of running water. Sir Reginald paused and listened. There were long-drawn sobs; somebody was in there, crying. That in itself was nothing very remarkable, and certainly

no business of his; yet some quick impulse made him turn back, go to the door of the alcove, and open it.

A light was burning within; a girl with outdoor coat and hat on was leaning against a small shelf table. She was sobbing with such passionate grief that she was not aware of him standing there in the doorway.

He cleared his throat, feeling unaccountably nervous for a man of his worldly experience.

The girl looked up at him and gave a little cry of astonishment. It was *his* girl: she whom his youth had dreamed of, and no other. She was looking at him now with a kind of dazed astonishment.

He had been wondering, during the day, whether, when next he saw her, her charm would still be there. So often one had only to look at women a little more closely to find how mistaken a first impression had been. But no, it remained, only the face was more tragic than he had imagined.

"My dear," he said, and then he paused. "Are you so very unhappy?"

"Yes, I am," she said, on a sob which could not be repressed.

There was a silence, and then Sir Reginald, forgetting, or perhaps remembering himself, asked:

"Is it that you love somebody?"

She nodded, then shook her head, giving both affirmation and negation. He saw her struggling with her grief; words were too painful. Her tears flowed afresh.

"I am—" he began, and again paused, not knowing how to express that which he felt such urgent need to make articulate. "I am a man who has seen life, and I have known suffering. There are times when even the sympathy of a stranger can help. Let me help you."

She looked at him now with an awakening interest, and he knew that she had seen and recognized him for the first

time. He felt that the soul and the intelligence behind those tear-wet eyes was weighing him in the balance.

"How can you help me?" she asked with a discernible bitterness.

"I don't quite know yet," he admitted somewhat weakly. "One never knows till one tries. What a woman needs is support, sympathy, a safe port in a storm. She needs kindness."

She was regarding him critically, still weighing him, puzzled by his sudden appearance. What was he doing there anyway, this military-looking gentleman in dress clothes, with his short, gray mustache and gray eyebrows. She had learned in the hard course of her life to question the motives of men. What were his motives? Or was he, as her abandonment in grief tempted her to believe, a simple and clean-hearted fellow?

"You look kind," she admitted.

He smiled. "That's the first essential. Can you tell me your trouble? It helps sometimes to speak it."

She bit her under lip and frowned; her hands were plucking at her dress. She was very charming, standing there in her uncertainty, a picture, and more than a picture: the reality of all that he had imagined. Sir Reginald James Farquarson felt strangely uplifted. A kind of pink sunshine seemed to envelop the scene. For him she was no longer a housemaid crying among hot-water pipes; she was the dream he had dreamed, but more tragic, more beautiful.

"Perhaps you love somebody," he suggested.

"Yes," she said simply; "I love somebody. I thought he loved me. He told me so. He's gone—gone away with another girl."

"He must be a pretty prize idiot," said Sir Reginald, and then he checked himself, for if he were to speak all that was in his heart, she might think that

he was merely an amorous old man taking advantage of her distress.

"Was he going to marry you?"

"Yes." The word was hardly whispered.

"And now he's gone away?"

"Yes; to Australia."

His next question came after a pause.

"Have you any friends?"

"Not any real friends now. I gave them up. I had only him. He—"

She began to cry again.

Sir Reginald touched her arm.

"You must stop crying," he said. "You've cried quite enough. Do you think that a man who would leave you like that is worth crying about? You are better rid of him early than late. Stop crying."

The kind authority in his voice made her obey.

"I feel so dreadfully alone," she said.

As she looked at him with the tears still running down her cheeks, he knew now at last the extent of the change which had been taking place in him during the day; he knew now definitely the extent of its far-reaching consequences. He saw in imagination the end of his adventure rather than the difficulties of its intermediate stages. Now, at the risk of being supremely ridiculous, he must release those emotional elements in his nature which had been dulled for so long.

"You need some one to care for you and protect you. Do you know who I am?"

"Yes; Sir Reginald Farquarson. You are very kind, sir." She seemed at this to withdraw away into herself, and he cursed himself for the folly of a false step.

He nodded.

"I am more than that," he said. "Now I want you to listen to me and to believe that I speak from my heart and not lightly. When I saw you this morning, when you came into my room, I loved you at first sight. I have been

thinking about you all day. I didn't love you because you were beautiful, as no doubt you are, but because you are the girl that I dreamed of when I was a boy. I have loved you all along without knowing you, and now I have met you at last. This may sound romantic and ridiculous, as God knows it may be, but it's true. I am a good deal older than you are, too old for you from the conventional standpoint, but I'm younger than my years. I am a strong man, stronger and fitter than many men in the thirties. I could care for you and protect you."

He paused, and now at last he got the full expression that he had imagined, but which till now he had missed upon this girl's face. A humorous smile came through the tragic mask.

"But your wife," she said, "and all your daughters." The smile deepened.

He didn't mind; he forgave her; he knew that people smiled at that long line of imposingly dull and heavy girls.

"I don't forget my responsibilities," he said. "They have had thirty years of my life, and they shall have the reward of my labors." Then breaking off, he opened a question which seemed to him at that moment far more urgent. "I am not repugnant to you, I hope?"

"No; not repugnant." She was still smiling through her tears.

He seemed to meditate on this; then:

"You've had a hard knock; it comes to most of us, one time or another. I don't expect you to love me—not at first. I want you to believe that I shall treat you with consideration and kindness." He frowned, for just some small fragment of his old critical self remained aware of the colossal quality of this absurdity. It was a small and detached fragment of that worldly wisdom that for so many years had controlled himself and his class. He didn't bother about it much; it was but a fragment, and would disappear amidst the rising waves of his new-found wisdom.

"Is there any particular reason why you should not come away with me? Are there any claims that hold you?"

She did not answer.

"No," he said. "I see there's nothing that really matters. You will come with me, and you will not regret it. I feel sure you will not regret it."

"Come with you? Where to?" Her smile was almost breaking into a laugh.

"We'll go abroad. I can make a living there where I know the trade. There's money in copra. I know where I can get my foot in, where there's no one who will recognize me. For a month or so we'll stay in England. We'll go to Yorkshire to a quiet place I know."

"I think you must be mad," she said in a voice that was so low as to be almost a whisper. She was no longer smiling, but looking at him with intent and serious eyes. Then with a flash of womanly intelligence: "Everybody knows who you are; they'd never let you do it."

"I shall disappear," he answered. "I shall be no longer myself, but another man. It will be as if I had walked out over the edge of one of the jetties and sunk like a stone to the bottom. My body won't float either. They will look for me, and when I don't turn up, they will believe me dead. My wife and daughters will inherit my pension—everything. They can have a free hand and live just as they like. I shall take what I stand up in. No"—and he smiled—"I shall change my clothes; I can't start my life in a tail coat and a boiled shirt. You'll have to trust me, but I know enough about life and the world to get money for us both."

He saw that she was about to speak, but he motioned her to be silent and went on:

"I shall do this now anyway, whether you come with me or not. Now, after I've met you, I am bound to do it. You've broken the crust of custom,

brushed the scales from my eyes; you've made me alive again. I never ought to have retired. I couldn't live here a life of idleness. Do you know the life that rich people live? Perhaps you've seen something of it: emptiness, filled with bridge and golf and scandal. The life of slugs, of pampered, parasitic dogs—of mangy cats is better. I am a man; I can't be contented with that." He was so excited that he was carried on the tide of his eloquence.

He paused. The girl watched him in silence. An amazing man, she thought, but, as he had said, *a man*, and worthy of respect. He was sincere—oh, yes; and nice, very nice.

"You would leave it all?" she questioned. "And lose your position and all your money?"

"By Heaven, I will." And then he broke into a laugh and caught her hand and held it. She let her hand remain in that firm grasp.

"You don't know anything about me," she said.

"No! In one way that's true."

She was regarding him intently and colored a little as she spoke:

"You don't know even—"

"No, I don't." He looked straight into her eyes. "But it doesn't make any difference; it will be for me to give you all the more care, all the love that you've missed."

"No, I'm not a bad girl," she said, coloring now more deeply.

"My dear, I never thought you were."

"No, and I haven't—not ever!" Then, suddenly, from the midst of her embarrassment, she smiled at him in that way that he found so wonderful and adorable.

"You'll come," he said, his eyes radiant with his conquest.

She answered slowly, "I'll come. I'll go with you wherever you like, and," she added, smiling again, "I think you are most awfully nice."

He kissed her, and she clung to him, crying a little.

"I must change my clothes," he said, "and get some money. I cashed a big check to-day; I can take that as my due, I think; that will do for a start. Run to your room and get any things that you want, and come back here quick. We must go to-night; to-morrow might be too late. Go quick and get your things. Come back quick. I'll be ready in five minutes."

Sir Reginald James Farquarson changed into a morning suit. From his dispatch case he took a handful of notes and gold. He counted it quickly, nodded, and put it in his pocket. He stood motionless for a few moments and smiled to himself. He had just recollected the lines of that poem about the thrush that had been running in his head all day, but which somehow he had not been able to recollect till that moment.

The wise thrush, he sings each song twice over,  
Lest you should think he never could recapture  
The first, fine, careless rapture.

Two years later Jim Ferguson was sailing his ten-ton cutter into the port of Lotopo. He had come from the Windward Islands with a cargo of copra. There were two black boys on board with smiling faces and long, fuzzy hair. His wife, in a white-silk blouse and a white skirt, with a white topee hat covering her yellow hair, stood by the mast. As the cutter entered the harbor a small dinghy was sailing out.

"Hullo, Ferguson!"

"Hullo, is the mail in yet?"

"Yes; came in yesterday." The sailor of the dinghy leaned forward and picked up something from the bottom of his boat. "Here's an English paper; you may care to see it." As the boats

passed he pitched an old copy of the *Times* onto the deck of the cutter.

"Thanks."

"Cheer-o! Are you over here for long?"

"No; just a trip."

The boats were already separated by a long distance.

Ferguson picked up the paper. He spoke to the girl.

"Will you take the helm, Lucy? Keep her as she's going."

The girl came aft and sat beside him. He opened the paper and began to read. His eye as it wandered over the printed page, caught the name that once had been his. There was a small paragraph to the effect that Lady Reginald Farquarson and her daughters, who were living at The Gables, Reigate, had now definitely concluded that Sir Reginald James Farquarson must be deceased. No least sign or trace, either living or dead, had been seen of him since his strange disappearance from a Liverpool hotel more than eighteen months ago. He read the paragraph twice, frowned a little, and smiled. He made a gesture as if about to show it to the girl beside him, but, changing his mind, he folded the paper and laid it down upon the deck.

"Do you know," he said, "it's just two years ago to-day since we met. Tell me, you don't ever regret it, do you?"

The girl looked at him; she didn't answer him in words; she merely smiled.

He put his arm round her, and, laying his hand upon the tiller, again took control of the boat.

"But do you ever regret that other fellow?" he asked seriously.

She turned to him, and, raising her hand, touched his face.

"You dear, stupid, darling man, don't you know that you are just a thousand times more to me than he could ever have been?"

# A Book Lovers' Tournament

*Introducing a new kind  
of mystery story*

*In THE FORETASTE of this issue are announced the title and author of the February anonymous story and the names of the successful entrants in the February BOOK LOVERS' TOURNAMENT.—The Editor.*

HOW fully does the style betray the writer? Could you detect the essence of Shakespeare in an obscure passage of his work? Could you read "Dickens" between the lines of a Pickwickian dialogue? Would the felicitous flow of an anonymous extract from a Stevenson romance reveal its author to you?

On the next page you will find a complete story whose title is withheld and whose author is left anonymous. The name of the author is known wherever books are circulated.

Can you identify the author and the story?

\* \* \* \* \*

IF you can detect the title of this month's anonymous story and the name of its author, send us a letter of not more than one thousand words, and in it tell us:

1. *The title of the story.*
2. *The full name of the story's author.*
3. *Your reason for attributing the story to the author you have named.*
4. *How you discovered the title of the story.*
5. *What you think of the story.*

\* \* \* \* \*

TO the writer of the most interesting letter composed as above outlined and correctly naming the title and author of the anonymous story appearing in this issue of AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE, the editors will pay fifty dollars. To each of the writers of the ten letters next in order of excellence the editors will pay five dollars.

\* \* \* \* \*

LETTERS will be judged on the basis of literary merit and authenticated accuracy. In order to receive consideration, each letter must show that its writer has definite knowledge of the anonymous story's title and author. This knowledge may come of standing familiarity with the works of the author under consideration, or may be derived from inquiry, research, and comparison. But each letter must clearly explain on what authority its writer bases his conclusion. Letters which exhibit evidence of guesswork will not receive consideration.

\* \* \* \* \*

ALL letters competing in the Book Lovers' Tournament of this issue must be received by the Editor of AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE, at 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City, on or before April 10th, 1926.

The names of successful contestants will be published in AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE for the month of June, 1926.

*There will be another anonymous story in the May issue.*

# Who Wrote This Story?



## What Is Its Title?

LATE in the autumn, not many years since, a public meeting was held at the Mansion House, London, under the direction of the lord mayor.

Among the late arrivals, who had no choice but to stand or to leave the hall, were two ladies. One of them at once decided on leaving the hall. "I shall go back to the carriage," she said, "and wait for you at the door." Her friend answered, "I shan't keep you long. He is advertised to support the second resolution; I want to see him, and that is all."

An elderly gentleman, seated at the end of a bench, rose and offered his place to the lady who remained. He was provided with an opera glass, which he more than once offered to her when famous orators appeared on the platform. She made no use of it until a speaker, known in the city as a ship-owner, stepped forward to support the second resolution.

His name—announced in the advertisements—was Ernest Lismore.

The moment he rose the lady asked for the opera glass. She kept it to her eyes for such a length of time, and with

such evident interest in Mr. Lismore, that the curiosity of her neighbors was aroused. Had he anything to say in which a lady—evidently a stranger to him—was personally interested? There was nothing in the address that he delivered which appealed to the enthusiasm of women. He was undoubtedly a handsome man, whose appearance proclaimed him to be in the prime of life, midway, perhaps, between thirty and forty years of age. But why a lady should persist in keeping an opera glass fixed on him all through his speech was a question which found the general ingenuity at a loss for a reply.

Having returned the glass with an apology, the lady ventured on putting a question next.

"Did it strike you, sir, that Mr. Lismore seemed to be out of spirits?" she asked.

"I can't say it did, ma'am."

"Perhaps you noticed that he left the platform the moment he had done?"

This betrayal of interest in the speaker did not escape the notice of a lady seated on the bench in front. Before the old gentleman could answer she volunteered an explanation.

"I am afraid Mr. Lismore is troubled by anxieties connected with his business," she said. "My husband heard it reported in the city yesterday that he was seriously embarrassed by the failure—"

A loud burst of applause made the end of the sentence inaudible. A famous member of parliament had risen to propose the third resolution. The polite old man took his seat, and the lady left the hall to join her friend.

The next day a clerk entered Mr. Lismore's private room at the office, and presented a visiting card.

"Does she look as if she wanted money?" Mr. Lismore inquired.

"Oh, dear no! She comes in her carriage."

"Is she young or old?"

"Old, sir."

To Mr. Lismore, conscious of the disastrous influence occasionally exercised over busy men by youth and beauty, this was a recommendation in itself. He said, "Show her in."

Observing the lady as she approached him with the momentary curiosity of a stranger, he noticed that she still preserved the remains of beauty. She had also escaped the misfortune, common to persons at her time of life, of becoming too fat. Even to a man's eye, her dressmaker appeared to have made the most of that favorable circumstance. Her figure had its defects concealed, and its remaining merits set off to advantage. At the same time she evidently held herself above the common deceptions by which some women seek to conceal their age. She wore her own gray hair, and her complexion bore the test of daylight. On entering the room, she made her apologies with some embarrassment.

"I am afraid I have chosen an inconvenient time for my visit," she began.

"I am at your service," he answered,

a little stiffly, "especially if you will be so kind as to mention your business with me in few words."

She was a woman of some spirit, and that reply roused her.

"I will mention it in one word," she said smartly. "My business is—gratitude."

He was completely at a loss to understand what she meant, and he said so plainly. Instead of explaining herself she put a question.

"Do you remember the night of the eleventh of March, between five and six years since?"

He considered for a moment.

"No," he said, "I don't remember it. Excuse me, Mrs. Callender, I have affairs of my own to attend to which cause me some anxiety—"

"Let me assist your memory, Mr. Lismore, and I will leave you to your affairs. On the date that I have referred to you were on your way to the railway station at Bexmore, to catch the night express from the north to London."

As a hint that his time was valuable the shipowner had hitherto remained standing. He now took his customary seat, and began to listen with some interest. Mrs. Callender had produced her effect on him already.

"It was absolutely necessary," she proceeded, "that you should be on board your ship in the London docks at nine o'clock the next morning. If you had lost the express the vessel would have sailed without you."

The expression of his face began to change to surprise.

"Who told you that?" he asked.

"You shall hear directly. On your way into the town your carriage was stopped by an obstruction on the high-road. The people of Bexmore were looking at a house on fire."

He started to his feet.

"Good heavens! Are you the lady?"

She held up her hand in satirical protest.

"Gently, sir! You suspected me just now of wasting your valuable time. Don't rashly conclude that I am the lady until you find that I am acquainted with the circumstances."

"Is there no excuse for my failing to recognize you?" Mr. Lismore asked. "We were on the dark side of the burning house; you were fainting, and I—"

"And you," she interposed, "after saving me at the risk of your own life, turned a deaf ear to my poor husband's entreaties when he asked you to wait till I had recovered my senses."

"Your poor husband? Surely, Mrs. Callender, he received no serious injury from the fire?"

"The firemen rescued him under circumstances of peril," she answered, "and at his great age he sank under the shock. I have lost the kindest and best of men. Do you remember how you parted from him—burned and bruised in saving me? He liked to talk of it in his last illness. 'At least,' he said to you, 'tell me the name of the man who has preserved my wife from a dreadful death.' You threw your card to him out of the carriage window, and away you went at a gallop to catch your train. In all the years that have passed I have kept that card, and have vainly inquired for my brave sea captain. Yesterday I saw your name on the list of speakers at the Mansion House. Need I say that I attended the meeting? Need I tell you now why I come here and interrupt you in business hours?"

She held out her hand. Mr. Lismore took it in silence and pressed it warmly.

"You have not done with me yet," she resumed, with a smile. "Do you remember what I said of my errand when I first came in?"

"You said it was an errand of gratitude."

"Something more than the gratitude which only says 'thank you,'" she added. "Before I explain myself, however, I want to know what you have been doing, and how it was that my inquiries failed to trace you after that terrible night."

The appearance of depression which Mrs. Callender had noticed at the public meeting showed itself again in Mr. Lismore's face. He sighed as he answered her.

"My story has one merit," he said; "it is soon told. I cannot wonder that you failed to discover me. In the first place, I was not captain of my ship at that time; I was only mate. In the second place, I inherited some money, and ceased to lead a sailor's life, in less than a year from the night of the fire. You will now understand what obstacles were in the way of your tracing me. With my little capital I started successfully in business as a shipowner. At the time I naturally congratulated myself on my own good fortune. We little know, Mrs. Callender, what the future has in store for us."

He stopped. His handsome features hardened, as if he were suffering—and concealing—pain. Before it was possible to speak to him there was a knock at the door. Another visitor without an appointment had called; the clerk appeared again with a card and a message.

"The gentleman begs you will see him, sir. He has something to tell you which is too important to be delayed."

Hearing the message, Mrs. Callender rose immediately.

"It is enough for to-day that we understand each other," she said. "Have you any engagement to-morrow after the hours of business?"

"None."

She pointed to her card on the writing table.

"Will you come to me to-morrow evening at that address? I am like the

gentleman who has just called: I, too, have my reason for wishing to see you."

He gladly accepted the invitation. Mrs. Callender stopped him as he opened the door for her.

"Shall I offend you," she said, "if I ask a strange question before I go? I have a better motive, mind, than mere curiosity. Are you married?"

"No."

"Forgive me again," she resumed. "At my age you cannot possibly misunderstand me; and yet——"

She hesitated. Mr. Lismore tried to give her confidence.

"Pray don't stand on ceremony, Mrs. Callender. Nothing that *you* can ask me need be prefaced by an apology."

Thus encouraged, she ventured to proceed.

"You may be engaged to be married?" she suggested. "Or you may be in love?"

He found it impossible to conceal his surprise, but he answered without hesitation.

"There is no such bright prospect in my life," he said. "I am not even in love."

She left him with a little sigh. It sounded like a sigh of relief.

Ernest Lismore was thoroughly puzzled. What could be the old lady's object in ascertaining that he was still free from a matrimonial engagement? If the idea had occurred to him in time he might have alluded to her domestic life, and might have asked if she had children. With a little tact he might have discovered more than this. She had described her feeling toward him as passing the ordinary limits of gratitude, and she was evidently rich enough to be above the imputation of a mercenary motive. Did she propose to brighten those dreary prospects to which he had alluded in speaking of his own life? When he presented himself at her house the next evening would

she introduce him to a charming daughter?

He smiled as the idea occurred to him. "An appropriate time to be thinking of my chances of marriage!" he said to himself. "In another month I may be a ruined man."

The gentleman who had so urgently requested an interview was a devoted friend, who had obtained a means of helping Ernest at a serious crisis in his affairs.

It had been truly reported that he was in a position of pecuniary embarrassment, owing to the failure of a mercantile house with which he had been intimately connected. Whispers affecting his own solvency had followed on the bankruptcy of the firm. He had already endeavored to obtain advances of money on the usual conditions, and had been met by excuses for delay.

The one security that he could offer was open, it must be owned, to serious objections on the score of risk. He wanted an advance of twenty thousand pounds, secured on a homeward-bound ship and cargo. But the vessel was not insured, and at that stormy season she was already more than a month overdue.

A man threatened by ruin is in no state of mind to keep an engagement at a lady's tea table. Ernest sent a letter of apology to Mrs. Callender, alleging extreme pressure of business as the excuse for breaking his engagement.

"Am I to wait for an answer, sir?" the messenger asked.

"No; you are merely to leave the letter."

In an hour's time, to Ernest's astonishment, the messenger returned with a reply.

"The lady was just going out, sir, when I rang at the door," he explained, "and she took the letter from me herself. She didn't appear to know your handwriting, and she asked me who I

came from. When I mentioned your name I was ordered to wait."

Ernest opened the letter.

DEAR MR. LISMORE: One of us must speak out, and your letter of apology forces me to be that one. If you are really so proud and so distrustful as you seem to be, I shall offend you; if not, I shall prove myself to be your friend.

Your excuse is "pressure of business;" the truth—as I have good reason to believe—is "want of money." I heard a stranger at that public meeting say that you were seriously embarrassed by some failure in the City.

Let me tell you what my own pecuniary position is in two words: I am the childless widow of a rich man—

Ernest paused. His anticipated discovery of Mrs. Callender's "charming daughter" was in his mind for the moment. "That little romance must return to the world of dreams," he thought, and went on with the letter.

After what I owe to you, I don't regard it as repaying an obligation; I consider myself as merely performing a duty when I offer to assist you by a loan of money.

Wait a little before you throw my letter into the waste-paper basket.

Circumstances—which it is impossible for me to mention before we meet—put it out of my power to help you—unless I attach to my most sincere offer of service a very unusual and very embarrassing condition. If you are on the brink of ruin that misfortune will plead my excuse—and your excuse, too, if you accept the loan on my terms. In any case, I rely on the sympathy and forbearance of the man to whom I owe my life.

After what I have now written, there is only one thing to add: I beg to decline accepting your excuses, and I shall expect to see you to-morrow evening, as we arranged. I am an obstinate old woman, but I am also your faithful friend and servant,

MARY CALLENDER.

Ernest looked up from the letter. "What can this possibly mean?" he wondered.

But he was too sensible a man to be content with wondering; he decided on keeping his engagement.

Mrs. Callender welcomed her guest, in a simple evening dress, perfectly suited to her age. All that had looked

worn and faded in her fine face by daylight was now softly obscured by shaded lamps. Objects of beauty surrounded her, which glowed with subdued radiance from their background of sober color. The influence of appearances is the strongest of all outward influences, while it lasts. For the moment the scene produced its impression on Ernest, in spite of the terrible anxieties which consumed him. Mrs. Callender in his office was a woman who had stepped out of her appropriate sphere. Mrs. Callender in her own house was a woman who had risen to a new place in his estimation.

"I am afraid you don't thank me for forcing you to keep your engagement," she said, with her friendly tones and her pleasant smile.

"Indeed I do thank you," he replied. "Your beautiful house and your gracious welcome have persuaded me into forgetting my troubles—for a while."

The smile passed away from her face. "Then it is true," she said gravely.

"Only too true."

She led him to a seat beside her, and waited to speak again until her maid had brought in the tea.

"Have you read my letter in the same friendly spirit in which I wrote it?" she asked when they were alone again.

"I have read your letter gratefully, but—"

"But you don't know yet what I have to say. Let us understand each other before we make any objections on either side. Will you tell me what your present position is—at its worst? I can, and will, speak plainly when my turn comes, if you will honor me with your confidence. Not if it distresses you," she added, observing him attentively.

He was ashamed of his hesitation, and he made amends for it.

"Do you thoroughly understand me?"

he asked when the whole truth had been laid before her without reserve.

She summed up the result in her own words:

"If your overdue ship returns safely within a month from this time, you can borrow the money you want without difficulty. If the ship is lost, you have no alternative, when the end of the month comes, but to accept a loan from me or to suspend payment. Is that the hard truth?"

"It is."

"And the sum you require is—twenty thousand pounds?"

"Yes."

"I have twenty times as much money as that, Mr. Lismore, at my sole disposal—on one condition."

"The condition alluded to in your letter?"

"Yes."

"Does the fulfilment of the condition depend in some way on any decision of mine?"

"It depends entirely on you."

That answer closed his lips.

With a composed manner and a steady hand, she poured herself out a cup of tea.

"I conceal it from you," she said, "but I want confidence. Here"—she pointed to the cup—"is the friend of women, rich or poor, when they are in trouble. What I have now to say obliges me to speak in praise of myself. I don't like it; let me get it over as soon as I can. My husband was very fond of me; he had the most absolute confidence in my discretion, and in my sense of duty to him and to myself. His last words before he died were words that thanked me for making his happiness of his life. As soon as I had in some degree recovered after the affliction that had fallen on me, his lawyer and executor produced a copy of his will, and said there were two clauses in it which my husband had expressed a

wish that I should read. It is needless to say that I obeyed."

She still controlled her agitation, but she was now unable to conceal it. Ernest made an attempt to spare her.

"Am I concerned in this?" he asked.

"Yes. Before I tell you why, I want to know what you would do—in a certain case which I am unwilling even to suppose. I have heard of men, unable to pay the demands made on them, who began business again, and succeeded, and in course of time paid their creditors."

"And you want to know if there is any likelihood of my following their example?" he said. "Have you also heard of men who have made that second effort, who have failed again, and who have doubled the debts they owed to their brethren in business who trusted them? I knew one of those men myself. He committed suicide."

She laid her hand for a moment on his.

"I understand you," she said. "If ruin comes—"

"If ruin comes," he interposed, "a man without money and without credit can make but one last atonement. Don't speak of it now."

She looked at him with horror.

"I didn't mean *that*!" she said.

"Shall we go back to what you read in the will?" he suggested.

"Yes, if you will give me a minute to compose myself."

In less than the minute she had asked for, Mrs. Callender was calm enough to go on.

"I now possess what is called a life interest in my husband's fortune," she said. "The money is to be divided at my death among charitable institutions, excepting in a certain event—"

"Which is provided for in the will?" Ernest added, helping her to go on.

"Yes; I am to be absolute mistress of the whole of four hundred thousand pounds"—her voice dropped, and her

eyes looked away from him as she spoke the next words—"on this one condition: that I marry again."

He looked at her in amazement.

"Surely I have mistaken you," he said. "You mean on this one condition: that you do *not* marry again?"

"No, Mr. Lismore; I mean exactly what I have said. You now know that the recovery of your credit and your peace of mind rests entirely with yourself."

After a moment of reflection he took her hand and raised it respectfully to his lips.

"You are a noble woman!" he said.

She made no reply. With drooping head and downcast eyes she waited for his decision. He accepted his responsibility.

"I must not, and dare not, think of the hardship of my own position," he said; "I owe it to you to speak without reference to the future that may be in store for me. No man can be worthy of the sacrifice which your generous forgetfulness of yourself is willing to make. I respect you; I admire you; I thank you with my whole heart. Leave me to my fate, Mrs. Callender—and let me go."

He rose. She stopped him by a gesture.

"A *young* woman," she answered, "would shrink from saying what I, as an old woman, mean to say now. I refuse to leave you to your fate. I ask you to prove that you respect me, admire me, and thank me with your whole heart. Take one day to think, and let me hear the result. You promise me this?"

He promised.

"Now go," she said.

The next morning Ernest received a letter from Mrs. Callender. She wrote to him as follows:

"There are some considerations which I ought to have mentioned yesterday evening before you left my house.

I ought to have reminded you—if you consent to reconsider your decision—that the circumstances do not require you to pledge yourself to me absolutely.

At my age I can, with perfect propriety, assure you that I regard my marriage simply and solely as a formality which we must fulfill, if I am to carry out my intentions of standing between you and ruin.

Therefore, if the missing ship appears in time, the only reason for the marriage is at an end. We shall be as good friends as ever, without the encumbrance of a formal tie to bind us.

In the other event, I should ask you to submit to certain restrictions, which, remembering my position, you will understand and excuse.

We are to live together, it is unnecessary to say, as mother and son. The marriage ceremony is to be strictly private, and you are so to arrange our affairs that, immediately afterward, we leave England for any foreign place which you prefer. Some of my friends, and, perhaps, some of your friends, will certainly misinterpret our motives, if we stay in our own country, in a manner which would be unendurable to a woman like me.

As to our future lives, I have the most perfect confidence in you, and I should leave you in the same position of independence which you occupy now. When you wish for my company you will always be welcome. At other times you are your own master. I live on my side of the house, and you live on yours; and I am to be allowed my hours of solitude every day in the pursuit of musical occupations, which have been happily associated with all my past life, and which I trust confidently to your indulgence.

A last word, to remind you of what you may be too kind to think of yourself.

At my age, you cannot, in the course of nature, be troubled by the society of a grateful old woman for many years. You are young enough to look forward to another marriage, which shall be something more than a mere form. Even if you meet with the happy woman in my lifetime, honestly tell me of it, and I promise to tell her that she has only to wait.

In the meantime, don't think, because I write composedly, that I write heartlessly. You pleased and interested me when I first saw you at the public meeting. I don't think I could have proposed what you call this sacrifice of myself to a man who had personally repelled me, though I would have felt my debt of gratitude as sincerely as ever. Whether your ship is safe or whether your ship is lost, old Mary Callender likes you, and owns it without false shame.

Let me have your answer this evening, either personally or by letter, whichever you like best.

Mrs. Callender received a written answer long before the evening. It said much in few words:

A man impenetrable to kindness might be able to resist your letter. I am not that man. Your great heart has conquered me.

The few formalities which precede marriage by special license were observed by Ernest. While the destiny of their future lives was still in suspense, an unacknowledged feeling of embarrassment on either side kept Ernest and Mrs. Callender apart. Every day brought the lady her report of the state of affairs in the city, written always in the same words: "No news of the ship."

On the day before the shipowner's liabilities became due the terms of the report from the city remained unchanged, and the special license was put to its contemplated use. Mrs. Callender's lawyer and Mrs. Callender's maid were the only persons trusted with the secret. Leaving the chief clerk in charge of the business, with every pecuniary demand on his employer satisfied in full, the strangely married pair quitted England.

They arranged to wait for a few days in Paris, to receive any letters of importance which might have been addressed to Ernest in the interval. On the evening of their arrival a telegram from London was waiting at their hotel. It announced that the missing ship had passed up channel—undiscovered in a fog until she reached the Downs—on the day before Ernest's liabilities fell due.

"Do you regret it?" Mrs. Lismore said to her husband.

"Not for a moment!" he answered.

They decided on pursuing their journey as far as Munich.

Mrs. Lismore's taste for music was matched by Ernest's taste for painting.

In his leisure hours he cultivated the art, and delighted in it. The picture galleries of Munich were almost the only galleries in Europe which he had not seen. True to the engagements to which she had pledged herself, his wife was willing to go wherever it might please him to take her. The one suggestion she made was that they should hire furnished apartments. If they lived at a hotel friends of the husband or the wife, visitors like themselves to the famous city, might see their names in the book or might meet them at the door.

They were soon established in a house large enough to provide them with every accommodation which they required.

Ernest's days were passed in the galleries, Mrs. Lismore remaining at home, devoted to her music, until it was time to go out with her husband for a drive. Living together in perfect amity and concord, they were nevertheless not living happily.

But when two people are living together in a state of artificial tranquillity, it seems to be a law of nature that the element of disturbance gathers unseen, and that the outburst comes inevitably with the lapse of time.

In ten days from the date of their arrival at Munich the crisis came. Ernest returned later than usual from the picture gallery, and, for the first time in his wife's experience, shut himself up in his own room.

He appeared at the dinner hour with a futile excuse. Mrs. Lismore waited until the servant had withdrawn.

"Now, Ernest," she said, "it's time to tell me the truth."

"I have nothing to tell."

"Were there many visitors at the gallery?" she asked.

"About the same as usual."

"Any that you particularly noticed?" she went on. "I mean among the ladies."

He laughed uneasily.

"You forget how interested I am in the pictures," he said.

There was a pause. She looked up at him, and suddenly looked away again; but—he saw it plainly—there were tears in her eyes.

"Do you mind turning down the gas?" she said. "My eyes have been weak all day."

He complied with her request the more readily, having his own reasons for being glad to escape the glaring scrutiny of the light.

"I think I will rest a little on the sofa," she resumed. In the position which he occupied his back would have been now turned on her. She stopped him when he tried to move his chair. "I would rather not look at you, Ernest," she said, "when you have lost confidence in me."

Not the words, but the tone, touched all that was generous and noble in his nature. He left his place and knelt beside her, and opened to her his whole heart.

"Am I not unworthy of you?" he asked, when it was over.

She pressed his hand in silence.

"I should be the most ungrateful wretch living," he said, "if I did not think of you, and you only, now that my confession is made. We will leave Munich to-morrow, and, if resolution can help me, I will only remember the sweetest woman my eyes ever looked on as the creature of a dream."

She hid her face on his breast, and reminded him of that letter of her writing which had decided the course of their lives.

"When I thought you might meet the happy woman in my lifetime I said to you, 'Tell me of it, and I promise to tell *her* that she has only to wait.' Time must pass, Ernest, before it can be needful to perform my promise, but you might let me see her. If you find her in the gallery to-morrow you might bring her here."

Mrs. Lismore's request met with no refusal. Ernest was only at a loss to know how to grant it.

"You tell me she is a copyist of pictures," his wife reminded him. "She will be interested in hearing of the portfolio of drawing by the great French artists which I bought for you in Paris. Ask her to come and see them, and to tell you if she can make some copies; and say, if you like, that I shall be glad to become acquainted with her."

He felt her breath beating fast on his bosom. In the fear that she might lose all control over herself, he tried to relieve her by speaking lightly. "What an invention yours is!" he said. "If my wife ever tries to deceive me, I shall be a mere child in her hands."

She rose abruptly from the sofa, kissed him on the forehead, and said wildly, "I shall be better in bed!" Before he could move or speak she had left him.

The next morning he knocked at the door of his wife's room, and asked how she had passed the night.

"I have slept badly," she answered, "and I must beg you to excuse my absence at breakfast time." She called him back as he was about to withdraw. "Remember," she said, "when you return from the gallery to-day I expect that you will not return alone."

Three hours later he was at home again. The young lady's services as a copyist were at his disposal; she had returned with him to look at the drawings.

The sitting room was empty when they entered it. He rang for his wife's maid, and was informed that Mrs. Lismore had gone out. Refusing to believe the woman, he went to his wife's apartments. She was not to be found.

When he returned to the sitting room the young lady was not unnaturally offended. He could make allowances for

her being a little out of temper at the slight that had been put on her; but he was inexpressibly disconcerted by the manner—almost the coarse manner—in which she expressed herself.

"I have been talking to your wife's maid while you have been away," she said. "I find you have married an old lady for her money. She is jealous of me, of course?"

"Let me beg you to alter your opinion," he answered. "You are wronging my wife; she is incapable of any such feeling as you attribute to her."

The young lady laughed.

"At any rate, you are a good husband," she said satirically. "Suppose you own the truth: wouldn't you like her better if she was young and pretty like me?"

He was not merely surprised, he was disgusted. Her beauty had so completely fascinated him when he first saw her that the idea of associating any want of refinement and good breeding with such a charming creature never entered his mind. The disenchantment to him was already so complete that he was even disagreeably affected by the tone of her voice; it was almost as repellent to him as the exhibition of unrestrained bad temper which she seemed perfectly careless to conceal.

"I confess you surprise me," he said coldly.

The reply produced no effect on her. On the contrary, she became more insolent than ever.

"I have a fertile fancy," she went on, "and your absurd way of taking a joke only encourages me! Suppose you could transform this sour, old wife of yours, who has insulted me, into the sweetest young creature that ever lived by only holding up your finger, wouldn't you do it?"

This passed the limits of his endurance.

"I have no wish," he said, "to forget

the consideration which is due to a woman. You leave me but one alternative." He rose to go out of the room.

She ran to the door as he spoke, and placed herself in the way of his going out.

He signed to her to let him pass.

She suddenly threw her arms round his neck, kissed him passionately, and whispered, with her lips at his ear:

"Oh, Ernest, forgive me! Could I have asked you to marry me for my money if I had not taken refuge in a disguise?"

When he had sufficiently recovered to think he put her back from him.

"Is there an end of the deception now?" he asked sternly. "Am I to trust you in your new character?"

"You are not to be harder on me than I deserve," she answered gently. "Did you ever hear of an actress named Miss Max?"

He began to understand her.

"Forgive me if I spoke harshly," he said. "You have put me to a severe trial."

She burst into tears.

"Love," she murmured, "is my only excuse."

From that moment she had won her pardon. He took her hand and made her sit by him.

"Yes," he said, "I have heard of Miss Max, and of her wonderful powers of personation; and I have always regretted not having seen her while she was on the stage."

"Did you hear anything more of her, Ernest?"

"Yes; I heard that she was a pattern of modesty and good conduct, and that she gave up her profession at the height of her success to marry an old man."

"Will you come with me to my room?" she asked. "I have something there which I wish to show you."

It was the copy of her husband's will.

"Read the lines, Ernest, which begin

at the top of the page. Let my dead husband speak for me."

The lines ran thus:

My motive in marrying Miss Max must be stated in this place, in justice to her, and, I will venture to add, in justice to myself. I felt the sincerest sympathy for her position. She was without father, mother, or friends, one of the poor, forsaken children whom the mercy of the foundling hospital provides with a home. Her after life on the stage was the life of a virtuous woman, persecuted by profligates, insulted by some of the baser creatures associated with her, to whom she was an object of envy. I offered her a home and the protection of a father, on the only terms which the world would recognize as worthy of us. My experience of her since our marriage has been the experience of unvarying goodness, sweetness, and sound sense. She has behaved so nobly in a trying position that I wish her—even in this life—to have her reward. I entreat her to make a second choice in marriage, which shall not be a mere form. I firmly believe that she will choose well and wisely, that she will make the happiness of a man who is worthy of her, and that, as wife and mother, she will set an example of inestimable value in the social sphere that she occupies. In proof of the heartfelt sincerity with which I pay my tribute to her virtues, I add to this, my will, the clause that follows.

With the clause that followed Ernest was already acquainted.

"Will you now believe that I never loved till I saw your face for the first time?" said his wife. "I had no experience to place me on my guard against the fascination—the madness, some people might call it—which possesses a woman when all her heart is given to a man. Don't despise me, my dear! Re-

member that I had to save you from disgrace and ruin. Besides, my old stage remembrances tempted me. I had acted in a play in which the heroine did—what I have done. It didn't end with me as it did with her in the story. *She* was represented as rejoicing in the success of her disguise. I have known some miserable hours of doubt and shame since our marriage. When I went to meet you in my own person at the picture gallery, oh, what relief, what joy I felt when I saw how you admired me! It was not because I could no longer carry on the disguise; I was able to get hours of rest from the effort, not only at night, but in the daytime, when I was shut up in my retirement in the music room, and when my maid kept watch against discovery. No, my love! I hurried on the disclosure because I could no longer endure the hateful triumph of my own deception. Ah, look at that witness against me! I can't bear even to see it."

She abruptly left him. The drawer that she had opened to take out the copy of the will also contained the false gray hair which she had discarded. It had only that moment attracted her notice. She snatched it up and turned to the fireplace.

Ernest took it from her before she could destroy it.

"Give it to me," he said.

"Why?"

He drew her gently to his bosom, and answered, "I must not forget my old wife."

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THE best of women are hypocrites. We don't know how much they hide from us; how watchful they are when they seem most artless and confidential; how often those frank smiles, which they wear so easily, are traps to cajole or elude or disarm—I don't mean in your mere coquettes, but your domestic models, and paragons of female virtue. Who has not seen a woman hide the dullness of a stupid husband, or coax the fury of a savage one? We accept this amiable slavishness, and praise a woman for it; we call this pretty treachery truth. A good housewife is of necessity a humbug; and *Cornelia's* husband was hoodwinked as *Potiphar* was—only in a different way.—*William Makepeace Thackeray.*

# Rafael *By* Sabatini

*Author of*

*Scaramouche*



## *The* FORTUNES OF LAL FAVERSHAM VI. IN THE ELEVENTH HOUR

FORTUNE was come at last! There are men who say of Charles that he had a longer memory for enemies than for friends, and that although he sought out and compassed the destruction of all who had been concerned either in his august father's death or in his own exile, yet many of those who had been stripped of everything by their loyalty to the Stuart cause were left to perish of want in the denuded state to which the Commonwealth had reduced them.

Haply, they have good cause for their complaint. But in me at least it were unfitting so to speak, for albeit tardily, yet my own restoration was come, and my broad Kentish acres were mine again by an act of kingly justice.

Truly, then, have I written: Fortune was come at last! But Fortune, with that blighting irony wherewith she is wont to sour the feasts she spreads, was come too late.

Of what avail these rich estates when she—the only one with whom I might have shared them—had lain these past three months in some remote Scotch grave? In the same pocket that held the deed of restitution lay cheek by jowl, as though in mockery of it, the letter that from her deathbed my gentle Margaret had penned me; while on my finger I wore the ring that once had been mine, then hers, now mine again. Nine years of loyalty; nine years of waiting; nine years of exile—for such an end as this.

I moved idly about Whitehall, rather with the air of a man beset by some dire calamity than of one so suddenly enriched.

Being one afternoon at the Mitre, in Wood Street, I came suddenly face to face with a tall, superbly-dressed man of my own age or thereabout, in whose handsome, florid countenance there lay a something that was familiar to me.

He eyed me for a moment, then approached the table at which I sat alone, and calmly seated himself before me.

"Have I not the honor," quoth he, in a low voice, leaning, as he spoke, across the board, "of addressing Sir Lionel Faversham, gentleman-in-waiting to his majesty?"

Time had given portliness to his form, and a masking grossness to his face, but the voice it had left unchanged. I started at the sound of it, for it was as a voice out of the past; a voice belonging to that time, nine years ago, when first I had met and wooed sweet Margaret Fitzmoris; a voice that last I had heard in the castle of Balfenochy, some months before Worcester was fought.

I sat and stared at him, unable to do more than gasp this name:

"Carleston!"

He laughed his easy, debonair laugh of old.

"I am right, it seems," said he. "You are paler and thinner than of old, and in your hair a thread or two of gray begins to set the seal of age, but otherwise you are much as you were on the day you held a pistol to my head at Balfenochy. That was our last meeting." And again he laughed, as though the memory afforded him amusement. "We parted enemies, but we were good friends before that, and so, Lal, for old time's sake, and to drown that enmity that may have stood betwixt us, let us crack a bottle."

"Your pardon, Lord Carleston," I answered stiffly, and pushing back my chair I rose. "I have kept odd company in my time, for fortunes such as mine have been bring one strange bedfellows. But never yet have I sat at table with a traitor, to my knowledge, nor will I do so now."

"Gadswounds!" he muttered, looking sharply round to see if any had overheard me. "If to change one's cause because, having perceived the errors of

the one he follows, a man doth wish to mend his ways, is to become a traitor, why, then, I take the title."

"I am a man of no great wit, my lord," I answered, "more used to blows than arguments—haply to this I owe it that I cannot see your actions in the light you seek to cast upon them. But this I know, Lord Carleston," I added sternly, "that you must perforce be a bold man to show your face in London at such a time."

"Have done, man," he cried with some show of anger. "It is well known that I fought and bled for good King Charles—"

"And," I added, in a whisper, "it is also well known to some that, because a royalist lady would have none of you, you turned traitor and took service with the solemn League and Covenant. Get you back to Scotland, my lord; back to the hills, and there lie hidden until his majesty shall have wearied of revenge."

"There is," said he, "but one man in London who can accuse me of this treason, as you call it, and he *will not*."

"How know you that?"

"How? Why, crush me, because, firstly, Lal Faversham is neither spy nor tipstaff, and, secondly, because when I shall have told him that 'tis for his sake that I am come to London—into the lion's maw—methinks his heart will dictate gratitude and friendship."

"For my sake!"

"Ay, for your sake, and a pretty greeting have I had. To tell you," he went on slowly, doling out each word as a miser might dole out gold, "to tell you that Margaret Fitzmoris lives, and sits in Perth pining to death because the lover to whom she plighted her troth nine years ago returns not."

Had a blow been dealt me across the head methinks it would have stunned me less.

"You lie, Carleston!" I gasped, at length.

He shrugged his shoulders, and turning, called for wine.

"There, drink, man," he bade me, when it was brought, "and I will tell you more."

Tacitly I took the bumper in my trembling hands, and gulped the contents at a draft.

"I say it is a lie, Carleton," I repeated. "I have in my pocket a letter written me in her last hour. I have the ring which she returned to me."

"You have been the victim of a foul plot of Sir John Gillespie's hatching," he announced. "You remember him?"

"Remember the man who sought to sell the King to Cromwell? Ay, I remember him," I answered grimly, "no less than he remembers me."

"He doth indeed remember you, and his hatred is as green as ever. The letter you have received was forged by him; the ring he stole from Mistress Margaret. 'Tis true enough, Lal. I had it from him one night, a month ago, when he was deep in his cups, as also I had it that he had sent a letter to Mistress Margaret which purported to come from you. Close upon the heels of that missive came the news of your betrothal to Mistress Hyde to confirm its contents to poor Margaret."

"Blood and wounds, man, is this the truth—or—or—"

"It is the truth, as it is the truth that Margaret lives."

"Why did Gillespie do so foul a thing?" I asked suspiciously.

"For hate of you, and love of her."

"And you," I exclaimed suddenly, "you who were Gillespie's friend and associate, why do you come to tell me of it? You loved her once yourself, Carleton. 'Twas that and her indifference made a traitor of you."

"I love her still, Faversham," he answered, with a sigh. "It is because of this love I bear her, and since it is not mine to win her for myself, that I cannot endure to look upon her affliction at

your supposed faithlessness. This it is that hath brought me to London to seek you out and bid you to Scotland. Now, you may deliver me to the King's justice if you have a mind to; my task is accomplished, I——"

I held out my hand.

"Carleton," I said, in a voice that was sorely shaken, "I have wronged you, and I crave your forgiveness. The debt in which to-day you have set me is too deep ever to be repaid. But for the sake of the old days you spoke of, Carleton, for the sake of the old friendship that linked us, let us crack the bottle that a while ago I churlishly refused."

The wine was brought. We sat down and filled our glasses.

"'Twas for her that we became enemies," said he, very sadly, "for her, and in her name let our peace be made. I drink to your speedy union." And we drained our glasses.

Then, as I set my bumper down, the full realization of the happiness, so little looked for, that was to be mine, burst fully upon me, and unnerved me. A mad laugh broke from my lips to startle those who may have heard it; then folding my arms upon the table I buried my face in them, and there, in the common room of the Mitre inn—strong man though I count myself—I fell a-sobbing as I had not sobbed for thirty years. I set out that very night for Perth, none knowing save Carleton the true errand that took me north. Him I left in London, it being his purpose to find a vessel that would bear him to France, in which country he deemed his head would rest more securely upon his shoulders than in England.

I traveled night and day in a fever of impatience that made me rail at the trifling halts necessary for the change of horses, and by prodigality of threats and lavishness of gold, I did so contrive that betwixt the Tuesday night on

which I had set out and the following Friday afternoon I had reached Berwick. Within a mile of the town the axle of my carriage broke, and I was compelled to set out afoot and walk the distance. I repaired to the Crown inn, and weary though I was, my first thought was for another coach. But in this endeavor I failed, despite the vast sums of money that I wildly offered, and at my failure I cursed and raved, little thinking how before to-morrow dawned I should have cause to thank God upon my knees for the mishap that had befallen me.

At last, and for a monstrous price, a horse was found me; and on this, despite my scant knowledge of the country and my spent condition, I determined to push on that very night to Edinburgh.

I left Berwick at sunset, and rode along for mayhap ten or twelve miles, when a fresh mischance overtook me, and the nag I bestrode cast a shoe. Perforce, I must get down, and taking the bridle on my arm, trudge along through the night that was fast closing in upon me. For some two hours I plodded on—scarce knowing whither—leading that lame brute and cursing the fates that did thus make a mock of me. To add to my discomfort, a fine rain was beginning to fall, when, at length, I espied the lights of the hamlet of Lenmuir.

When I was within half a mile of the place a horseman passed me at a perilous gallop, and with ne'er a glance in my direction. A man afoot, leading a horse, he may in the dark have held to be some peasant homeward bent. I shouted to him, for I would have bought that mettlesome horse of his for any price that he might set upon it. But either he heard me not or left my cry unheeded, and in this again Providence befriended me, for 'tis odds that had he turned, my sands had been run within the hour.

By the door of an inn too mean to

own an ostler I came some ten minutes later upon his tethered nag. The place was little better than a hovel, yet the light that streamed from door and window was inviting. Through that window I shot a passing glance, then stood as if frozen there, and stared with eyes wide open, and whose sight I dared not credit, at a tall, swart man who formed the center of a group strangely ill attuned to that foul chamber.

That man—at a glance I knew him—was Sir John Gillespie, Argyle's kinsman, the man who, ten years ago, had sought to sell the King to Cromwell; the covenanting dog who was Carleton's friend, and whom Carleton accused of having tricked both me and Margaret; the man than whom in my thirty-seven years of life I had had no bitterer enemy.

Little did I dream as in my astonishment I gazed upon that stately figure—which time appeared to have left untouched—that I—drawn thither by God's almighty providence—did myself supply the motive for that gathering and the subject of their talk that very moment. Gillespie's voice it was, harsh and loud as of old, that discovered to me what was afoot. He addressed himself to a knave who, cloaked and booted, stood hat in hand before him, in a respectful attitude, and whom I guessed to be the man that had ridden past me on the road.

"At Berwick you say he has been compelled to lie?"

"Yes, Sir John. His coach lay with a snapped axle a mile or so beyond the town as I rode by. In the yard of the Crown I came upon him raving at the landlord; but no fresh carriage can he have until to-morrow, and, perforce, he must remain there to-night."

"It seems, then, gentlemen, that the Kirk must wait another day," said Gillespie. Then turning to the messenger again—"How left you my Lord Carleton?"

"In excellent health, as his letter will doubtless tell you."

A letter from Carleton! I set my teeth hard and clenched my hands, for in that hour I knew upon what errand I had been sent to Scotland. Once a traitor, ever a traitor—I should have known it. Vainly did I search in my mind a purpose for this betrayal, and next a chill dread beset me as I asked myself how far he had lied. Was it a lie that Margaret lived?"

"Gentlemen," came Sir John's voice, "you may depart since he comes not to-night. I shall await you here by eight o'clock to-morrow morning. Good night to you."

I had sense enough to slink away and crouch 'neath the shelter of a hedge to await their departure. Since Sir John bade them good night he remained. I thanked God for that.

A few minutes went by, then from the rear of the building they came riding out—four of them in all—and took their way along the road by which I had arrived. Presently the messenger came out, and mounted. With a "Good night, Sir John," he rode away in the wake of the others.

Some moments yet I tarried 'neath that hedge, then, coming forth, I crept cautiously toward the casement, and peered in. By the dirty table of coarse deal stood Sir John perusing a paper which he held to the trembling light of a greasy candle. Doubtless this was Carleton's letter, and the one purpose predominating in my mind was to become possessed of it. A moment I lingered by the window, watching him and wondering how I might compass my design; next, with no plan formed beyond the fixed resolve to get that paper at any cost, I softly drew my sword, and crept round to the door.

On tiptoe I stole across the threshold, then paused to observe him. A little while—while a man might tell a dozen—I stood there motionless, with not six

paces separating us, and watched him, and although his back was toward me, methought the throbbing of my pulses loud enough to betray my presence. But intent upon that precious letter he made no stir until the end was reached; then with a chuckle he folded it and was thrusting it into his pocket as he turned and came of a sudden face to face with me.

Like some apparition must I have seemed to him, as I stood there, grim and silent, my naked sword in my hand. For a second he stared with wrinkled brows and open jaw; then his sudden gasp told me that he recognized me,

"Sir John," said I politely, "I must trouble you for that letter."

His answer was a bellowed oath, and before I could move to prevent it, his sword was out.

"Fool!" he cried, with a sardonic laugh. "Come, take the letter. I'll save the Kirk the trouble of hanging you."

No invitation could he have given me that I had more eagerly accepted, and for some moments we were wondrous busy in that hovel. The clash and slither of steel was the language in which Sir John and I discussed the enmity that for ten years had lain betwixt us. It was soon ended. He parried overwidely, and one opening he gave me that was too tempting to be left unheeded. He saw the error of it when two thirds of my cold bilbo were through his vitals.

He sank writhing to the ground, carrying the rickety table with him in his fall, and extinguishing the light. Swiftly I pounced upon him as he lay twisting and cursing in his last agony, and from his left hand I wrested the letter which with his fast-ebbing strength he feebly strove to clutch.

I rose up to find a man—whose figure was barely discernible in the gloom—standing in the doorway. I take it he was the landlord. As I turned he sprang forward wielding what appeared

to be a club. He swung it aloft and aimed a blow at me; I leaped aside, and there was a crash as his weapon struck the floor. Another door, leading toward the interior of the hostelry, was opened, and a woman appeared bearing a rushlight.

This door was close beside me, and scarce knowing why, I bounded toward it, and brushed past her. I found myself in a smaller room, which in the fleeting glance I gave it appeared to be the kitchen. There was a door beyond, leading toward the open. I made for this, and outside I came upon an urchin holding a horse—Sir John's, I opine.

I snatched the reins from the lad's hand, and vaulting into the saddle, I buried my spurs in the animal's flanks.

It was past midnight when I drew rein before the hostelry of the Crown, and got down to kick at the door until 'twas opened by the night-capped host. I pushed past him into the house, bidding him see to my horse, and paying scant heed to his grumbling. Then seizing a taper I drew forth the letter that already had cost a man his life that night, and read:

DEAR JACK: It is my hope that the first messenger I dispatched to you, to warn you of the coming of Lal Faversham, hath reached you without mishap. From that letter you will have gathered that the fool took the bait I offered him with avidity. Within twelve hours he was on the road to Scotland, and not a moment too soon, for my angel Margaret arrived here but two hours after his departure. His absence, and the news which her father culled at Whitehall of his sudden flight, have set at rest her last doubt touching his faithlessness. She must perforce confess to me that things had fallen out as I predicted, and, in a fit of scorn at the cowardice of a faithless knave who dared not stay to face her, and at herself for ever having given him a thought, she did consent, within three hours after her arrival, to become my wife. Am I not the luckiest of men, Jack? And is not Faversham the most witless of fools? It is midnight—but six hours since Faversham's departure for Perth, yet so much already is accomplished. This letter should reach you at Berwick before Faversham can gain the place, for whereas

he goes by coach, the bearer travels on horseback, and will deliver this at York to another courier, who will pursue the journey. They have ample relays awaiting them along the road. Margaret has consented to marry me on Monday. The haste is necessary as I leave England with her immediately afterward. If you can contrive to consign Faversham into the hands of the Covenanters in time, and you care to adventure your handsome neck in London, you will add another ray to the happiness that is to be mine on Monday.

I set down the hideous missive, which bore Carleton's signature, and stood dumfounded at the revelation which it brought me. Margaret lived—that at least was true. But unless I could get me back to London by Monday—and this already the dawn of Saturday—Carleton's devilish plan must succeed. But I made a solemn vow that should I reach London too late to hinder Margaret from becoming the wife of Carleton, I would at least mend matters by making her also his widow.

In a frenzy, I called the host and bade him fetch back the horse that a while ago I had bidden him bait. Agape at my apparent madness, he went to rouse the ostler, from whom some moments later I received that stolen nag which, fortunately, was a stout and able animal. And I did <sup>so</sup> use it that by the noon of Saturday I was in Durham—albeit 'tis unlikely that horse would ever carry another man. I reached York toward ten that Saturday night, and there, more dead than living, I was compelled to halt and rest for a few hours.

All Sunday I rode, and all Sunday night—using three more horses on the journey, and well-nigh riding to death the last one, on which I ambled up King Street on Monday morning shortly after nine. Jaded beyond conception, and travel-stained as I was, I went forthwith in quest of Killigrew, the likeliest person to afford me the news I sought. I had the good fortune to find him still abed, for a royal frolic

had kept him from his couch till day-break. He was able to tell me that Carleston was to be found at the Dolphin, and Sir Everard Fitzmoris in Pall Mall. I waited for no more, but left him, and taking a hackney coach I went forth-with to the Dolphin Inn.

I found Carleston dressing, with the aid of his body servant, and humming a gay measure as I entered his chamber unannounced.

He caught sight of my reflection in the mirror, and wheeled sharply round, his cheeks going ghastly white.

"Gadsounds!" he ejaculated, as his eye rested on my dusty person.

"You had best dismiss your servant," I suggested, as coolly as I might, where-upon he passively motioned the fellow to withdraw.

"So, my good friend Carleston," I began, "you are arraying yourself for your nuptials, eh? 'Tis a mistake, my fine fellow—a mistake. 'Tis I who am to be the bridegroom, after all, not you. Yes, man, I—Lal Faversham. I have ridden hard so that I might come in time; harder even than your couriers who bore this letter to Sir John Gillespie," and I flourished the paper under his nose.

He recovered partly his composure at that, and sought to bluster it.

"Pah!" he laughed. "You have found it out, have you? Well, what now, my master? Are you come to pick a quarrel with me?"

It was my turn to laugh.

"Odds-life, no, you fool! Think you I would pick a quarrel on my wedding morn? Besides, 'tis but three days since I killed a man—your friend Gillespie."

At that he started and changed color.

"No, no," I pursued, smiling upon him as though he were my dearest friend. "I am come to pick no quarrel. I am rather come to give you a friendly word of counsel, Carleston. See that

you are out of London before noon, and out of England before dawn to-morrow."

"D—n you! 'Tis to threaten you are come."

"Fie, Carleston! Who talks of threats? I do but advise. The King is like to hear at any moment, not only of your presence here, but of your achievements in Scotland after Dunbar. In truth, my dear Carleston," I added, with another smile, "I chance to know that he will hear of all this before noon to-day. The vengeance of Charles Stuart is far-reaching, and I counsel you not to return to England while he fills the throne. Give you good day, my lord."

And, turning, I left him standing there with mouth agape, the very picture of a fool. Yet but that it was my marriage morn, 'tis likely I should have left him in a plight yet worse.

Assured that he would take my warning, I repaired in the first place to my lodging at Whitehall to don my gayest suit, and thence, with scant delay I hastened to Sir Everard's house in Pall Mall. In a fever, I followed the lackey who admitted me; my eyes burned in their sockets; my lips were dry; my mouth parched, and in a mirror I caught in passing a glimpse of a face that was gaunt and deadly pale.

I found Sir Everard in the library. His hair was become snowy white, and his tall frame had lost much of its upright firmness of nine years ago. In me mayhap he saw scant change, for at the first glance he knew me. He rose to receive me with a frown of anger 'twixt his brows.

"Faversham!" he exclaimed, then added before I could make answer, "What is your business here and on such a day?"

"Upon no fitter day could I arrive, Sir Everard."

"Know you not that my daughter is to be wed at noon?"

"I do indeed, Sir Everard, since I am come to be the bridegroom."

The blood mounted hotly to his forehead.

"Is this some graceless jest? Are you so lost to shame? Is it not enough that your faithlessness hath well-nigh broken my poor child's heart—for 'tis the way of woman to love those that are most unworthy. You who, like the craven hound you are, fled from London and the reproaches with which you fancied she might importune you!"

"Tis false!" I thundered, silencing him by my very vehemence. "False as the foul lips that told it to you."

"False?" he echoed incredulously. "Is it false that when you landed in England, some four months ago, you wrote to Margaret that your heart had changed? Is it false that you are to wed Anne Hyde? Despite that vile letter, sir, and the news we had of your approaching nuptials, my poor Margaret sought still to believe in you. She would not wed the man who by eight years of unflagging devotion had proved the quality of his affection, until first she had come to London and stooped to have speech with you. I allowed her this whim, to what purpose? To find you fled like a craven at the news of our approach. Tell me, sir," he added, with withering contempt, "is that also false?"

"By God, sir, I will tell you," I cried.

And then, in hot, passionate, maddened speech, I told him of the letter which, that night four months ago, I also had received—the false message that I had credulously believed was penned by Margaret's dying hand. That letter I showed him, and the ring. In burning words I painted to him my grief, and the bitterness that had soured for me the joys of the Restoration. Then I spoke of Carleston's message delivered to me a week ago, and of the hope new-risen in my heart that sent

me flying north. I told him how Heaven had guided me to the hostelry at Lenmuir, and I read aloud to him the letter that had cost Gillespie his life.

"Oh, Lal, Lal," he cried, holding out both hands to me. "Let us thank God that you are yet in time."

"I do, Sir Everard, and shall do so all my life," I answered, seizing his trembling hands in mine. "Take me to Margaret, Sir Everard," I cried a moment later. "For nine years have I waited, but not a moment longer."

"Nor shall you, Lal," came a voice behind us, and as I turned I saw the curtain that masked the doorway drawn aside, and standing there I beheld my love at last. I forgot as I looked that nine years of exile were sped since our last meeting, and meseemed that the very maid of seventeen that I had left was this. The same slight form, and the same sweet, tender face, though very pale and wistful now.

For a moment I stood as one robbed of all volition, then, with a loud cry, I sprang forward and fell on my knees before her. I caught her hands in mine, and with a sob I drew them to my lips.

"You heard me, sweet mistress?"

"I heard all, Lal," she answered.

"And you believe?"

"Believe? I do indeed believe."

Gently she drew her hands from mine, and taking my face betwixt them, she raised it until my eyes looked into hers.

And as her father had said a while ago—but in a voice that was infinitely tender, ineffably sweet:

"Oh, Lal, my Lal, thank God that you are come in time!"

Such was the morning of my wedding day; such the dawn of the happiness that Heaven hath vouchsafed me; such the true beginning, and not the end of the fortunes of Lal Faversham.

# The Foretaste

IN AINSLEE'S FOR MAY  
ARNOLD JACKSON stood staring in front of him. His thin, thoughtful face was very grave. Bateman, glancing at it, was once more conscious of its intense spirituality.

"Beauty," murmured Arnold Jackson. "You seldom see beauty face to face. Look at it well, Mr. Hunter, for what you see now you will never see again, since the moment is transitory, but it will be an imperishable memory in your heart. You touch eternity."

His voice was deep and resonant. He seemed to breathe forth the purest idealism, and Bateman had to urge himself to remember that the man who spoke was a criminal and a cruel cheat.

"Here is my daughter, Mr. Hunter."

Bateman shook hands with her. She had dark, splendid eyes and a red mouth tremulous with laughter; but her skin was brown, and her curling hair, rippling down her shoulders, was coal black. She wore but one garment, a Mother Hubbard of pink cotton, her feet were bare, and she was crowned with a wreath of white, scented flowers. She was a lovely creature. She was like a goddess of the Polynesian spring.

*From "The Fall of Edward Barnard," a complete novel, by W. Somerset Maugham.*

\* \* \*

IN the retrospect Ann Veronica was amazed to think how things had gone to pieces, for at the outset she had been quite prepared to go home again upon terms. While waiting for her father's coming, she had stated her present and future relations with him with what had seemed to her the most satisfactory lucidity and completeness. She had

looked forward to an explanation. Instead had come this storm, this shouting, this weeping, this confusion of threats and irrelevant appeals. Moreover, atrociously and inexorably, he allowed it to appear ever and again in horrible gleams that he suspected there was some man in the case. Some man!

*From "Ann Veronica," by H. G. Wells.*

\* \* \*

IT is the truth," he whispered, "that I tried to kill her. She only defended herself. It was an accident. Anna."

There was such pleading passion in the weak voice that the doctor sprang up, took the woman by the wrist, and dragged her to her husband.

He looked at her with blue, hazy eyes, and stammered: "Anna—you do—love me a little?" The remnant of his life flowed into the intensity of his words, and the doctor could have struck her when she jumped away and broke through her stillness, sobbing:

"If I told you that, I'd lie, and you know it! Since the day we were married you have done nothing but torment me. If I could remember one little kindness you've done me in all that time, I'd say what you want me to. But I can't."

She fled into the next room, and the doctor bent over the man to whom death came.

*From "The House in the Reeds," by Signe Toksvig.*

\* \* \*

ALSO in the May issue, the sixth Book Lovers' Tournament, and stories by Anatole France, O. Henry, E. W. Hornung, Israel Zangwill, Henri Murger, and Anthony Hope.

## TOURNAMENT AWARDS

THE anonymous story in the Book Lovers' Tournament for February was written by Rudyard Kipling. Its title is "Cupid's Arrows." It is one of the "Plain Tales from the Hills."

Mr. J. A. Murphy, of Magog, Province of Quebec, Canada, contributed the winning letter reproduced below, and has been awarded the first prize of fifty dollars.

Following the winning letter are extracts from the ten entries judged next in order of excellence. To each of these, prizes of five dollars have been awarded.

## THE WINNING LETTER

*The Editor, AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE:*

The untitled story in your February issue is "Cupid's Arrows," from "Plain Tales From the Hills," by Rudyard Kipling. My acquaintance with the story dates from my early youth, when a rapacious appetite for reading devoured repeatedly this, the first volume of Kipling to come my way. But the passing years obliterated the vivid impression of this introduction to a caustic fare which a childish palate could not savor, while in noble array flowed past "The Jungle Books," "Stalky & Co.," "Soldiers Three," and all the other members of that dynamic and variable collection. The swinging fervor of his poetry was next to inflame the youthful soul, with all its chanting rhythms, with beat and roll of drum, with brazening of trumpets and the ardor of high adventure in strange far-off lands.

And lately "Kim," above all else the greatest of this man's labors. Reading and re-reading serve only to render more fascinating this epic of teeming life under an alien sky along the ancient ways of India. There is beauty, there is glamour and pure romance, such as few writers have ever evoked.

Of late a desire possessed me to peruse once more these "Plain Tales" and recapture, if possible, the early interest that aroused a mind slowly awakening to a life broader and more full than the circumscribed existence of a small community. The resulting purchase was the begetter of a sense of disappointment; the magic had departed, there remained only a modest charm, and that somewhat raddled and aging.

Should then this story be considered in relation to the best of Kipling's work, or be judged as the product of an unknown hand?

Frankly, I am not an admirer of Kipling as a realist; and these earlier writings, while admirable, are not the greatest of his repertoire. The society he defines, the petty officialdom of Simla, the military caste and its satellites—all of which he was to deify later with poorer effect—moves within its tiny orbit with such poverty of motion that very small attraction is exerted on the imagination.

Yet the tale in question is penned with keen skill. All the traces of a fine craftsman are here apparent and it would have been a dull pedant critic who could not have prophesied greater work from the young Kipling. Verbose has no part in its content and a sparing of phrase characterizes the whole action, in distinct contrast to the looseness of other fables in the same volume. Perhaps the most apt definition would be to name "Cupid's Arrows" the best of the earlier manner.

Kipling is above all a romantic. When he sentimentalizes he can be recognized as a fraud; when he beats the jingo drum he is a small boy leading his own parade of one. But as the pure romanticist, the vivid portrayer of glamorous moments of life, he is revelling in his true element. Turn to "The Brush-wood Boy," to certain of the Mulvaney stories, to his yarns of native life, and above all to "Kim," and you will find the proofs. There life flows eagerly above the ruder strata of existence, a life that is free from ties, boundless in horizon, replete with the stuff of dreams. Nowhere else does the man so rejoice in words, so obviously enjoy each moment of labor, as in the works of romantic fancy. They crowd forth from his imagination, untrammeled by fact, unleashed and superb, never the effect of photographic travail. And because of this aptitude for fanciful portrayal he fails as a realist. To be truly great in this phase of the writer's art, the artist must do more than portray the surface of existence; he must probe unerringly below the surface of the skin, laying bare every inmost fiber, vein, and nerve. In this I feel that Kipling fails because his mind does not possess the qualities of a scientist, forever searching for truth behind the veil of illusion. Always he visions existence through a mist of dreams, a haze of fancy, and at his greatest he transmits to his reader that dream of a life that might be, were we able to cast away the pilgrim's burden and cross the Slough of Despond to a land where beauty colors the endless span of days.

And I should be ungracious were I to deny homage when so much fine art has been and continues to be the source of keen delight.

J. A. MURPHY.

Magog, Quebec, Canada.

*From Other Prize Winners*

The tale belongs to that initial output whose "smart journalism" shocked Stevenson on the one hand and ruined the Beardsley-Wilde aesthetic movement on the other. The work of a lettered journalist of genius, trained to writing down to a magazine public.

Providence, Rhode Island. F. CURTIS.

\* \* \*

What could any reader think of "Cupid's Arrows" except that it is one of the gayest and most fascinating little tales? It does not compare in my mind with such Kiplingesque masterpieces as "Without Benefit of Clergy," or "The Man Who Would Be King," or that weird and terrible story of Bimi, the ape "with too much ego in his cosmos." But it is perfection, no less, of its type.

LENORA PEARL BRACE.

Seattle, Washington.

\* \* \*

Many years ago when I was young my father brought home a little volume, badly bound, called "Soldiers Three." Out of it he read aloud with great glee and much chuckling—deep-throated, happy chuckles. Then he loudly proclaimed: "This is a great chap, this Kipling—the best yet. Watch out for everything he writes and grab it quick. He's going to be heard from much and often."

Portland, Oregon. A. W. NICHOLSON.

\* \* \*

I have searched this story, as before this I have searched other works of Kipling, for traces of just enough philosophic intelligence to make him worth while, and have found nothing that repaid the effort.

Fargo, North Dakota. P. T. STRICKER.

\* \* \*

Live in the East and then read a story whose plot is laid there, and you will want to jump up a dozen times crying: "That's wrong!" or: "That isn't so!" For it is curious how many mistakes a person can make who does not know the East thoroughly. But the phrase "the ugliest man in Asia," at once stamps the author of the mystery story as

a writer who does know his East intimately, for it is common there to describe a man as the "thirstiest man in Asia," or "the closest man in Asia," or "the luckiest man in Asia," according to his predominant trait.

Montreal, Canada. H. B. GRANT.

\* \* \*

Mr. Kipling certainly could swing a wicked whip when he wrote of the frailties of mankind.

J. L. PEPPER.

Portland, Maine.

\* \* \*

Undoubtedly "Cupid's Arrows"—sweetly ironic title!—makes no pretensions to outstanding importance among Kipling's works. It was obviously written solely to amuse, and in this, surely, it succeeds.

B. M. CASTNER.

New Haven, Connecticut.

\* \* \*

The texture of the story is thoroughly suggestive of the writer, especially in his Indian period. There is the artlessness of his short sentences and his direct style, both suggesting the oral narrative of the smoking room.

ARTHUR L. SILVERMAN.

Honolulu, Hawaii.

\* \* \*

Kipling was the first writer to strip the glory and glitter from war and show it as it is. He has the faculty beyond any other writer of limning human nature in a catch phrase; an empire in a nutshell.

New York City. ABBIE L. MORSE.

\* \* \*

A long time ago I fell under Kipling's spell. To-night I retrieved a shabby volume, and then—forgive me—I forgot all about AINSLEE'S and the contest, for on page nine I ran across a lady I've long admired, that gallant little she-soldier of fortune, Mrs. Hawksbee. She was, as usual, in the midst of an "affair," and I read on and on, until, smiling at the conclusion of one of her cleverest bits of finesse, I turned a page and found myself regarding the nameless story, all properly captioned.

MAUD KENNEN WADDOCK.

St. Louis, Missouri.

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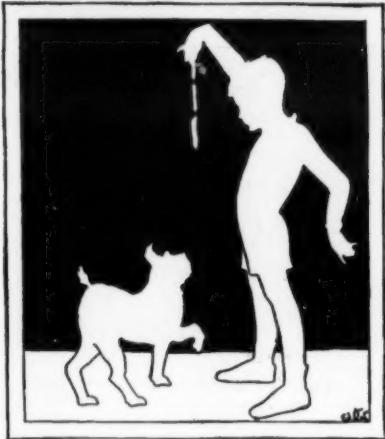
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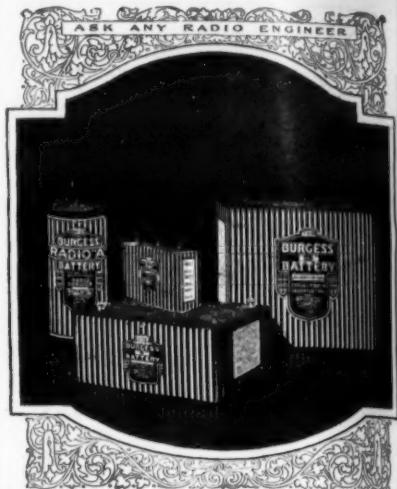
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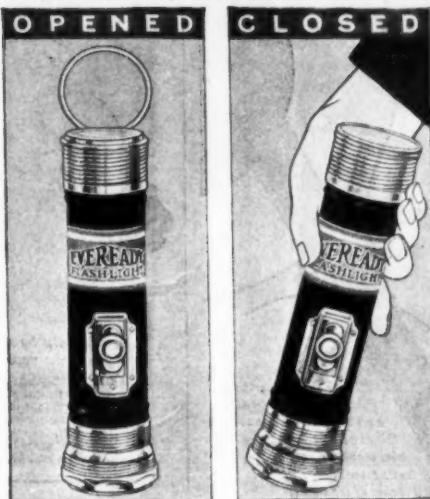
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*Write rings around the other  
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your dentist in time**

Don't let negligence keep you away  
from your dentist until pain drives  
you to him. At least twice a year go  
to your dentist for thorough mouth  
inspection. He will help you avoid  
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your teeth and gums healthy.

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4 out of 5**

Remember that four out of five who pass the  
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dental statistics.

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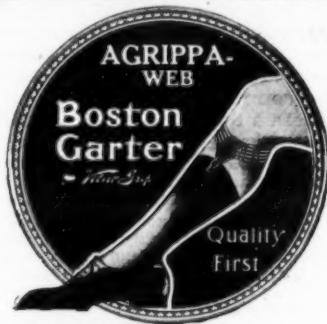
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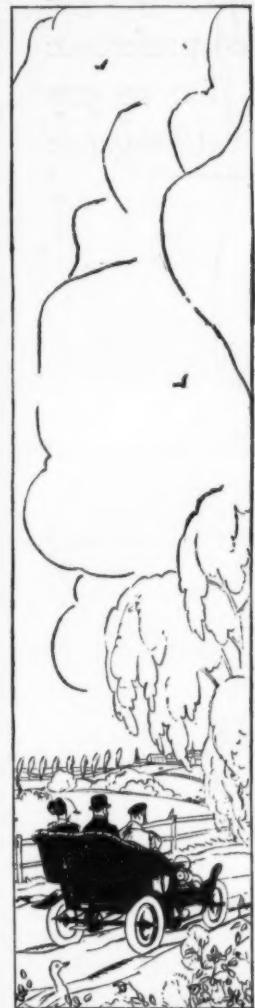
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